A GENTLEMAN GOOD AT KNITTING IS NOT GOOD AT KNITTING THE LOVE

関根くんの恋 1

河内遙

fx COMICS

SEKINE'S LOVE 1

HARUKA KAWACHI

A GENTLEMAN GOOD AT KNITTING IS NOT GOOD AT KNITTING RELATIONSHIPS TOGETHER

fx COMICS

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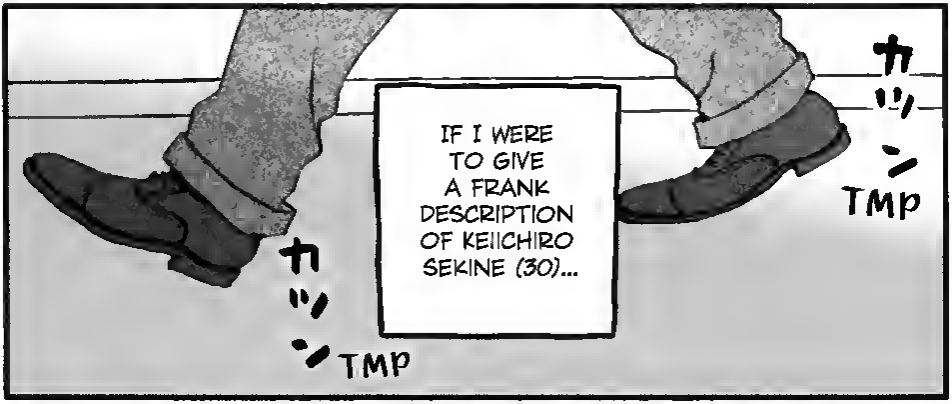
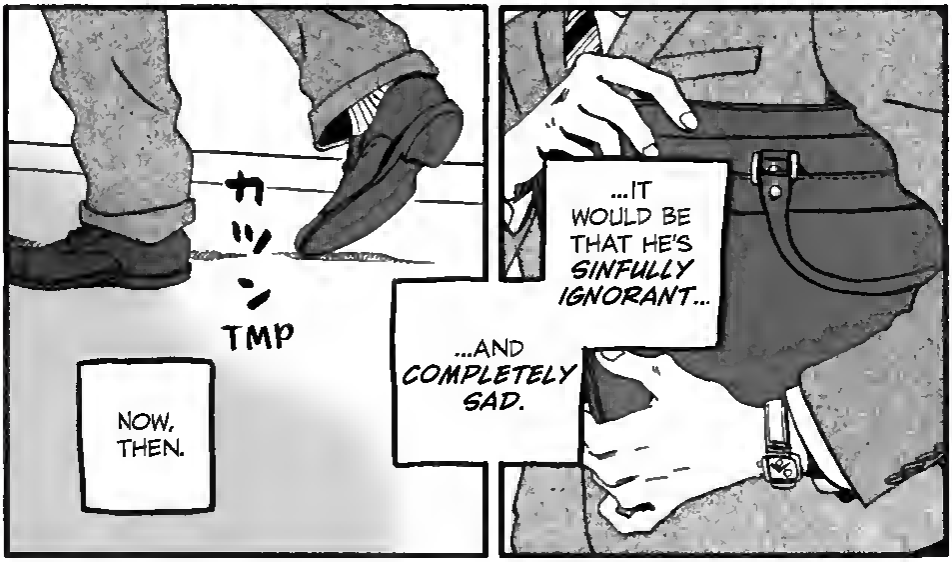
THE WORLD IS MADE UP OF TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE: THOSE WHO ARE HAPPY AND THOSE WHO ARE UNHAPPY.



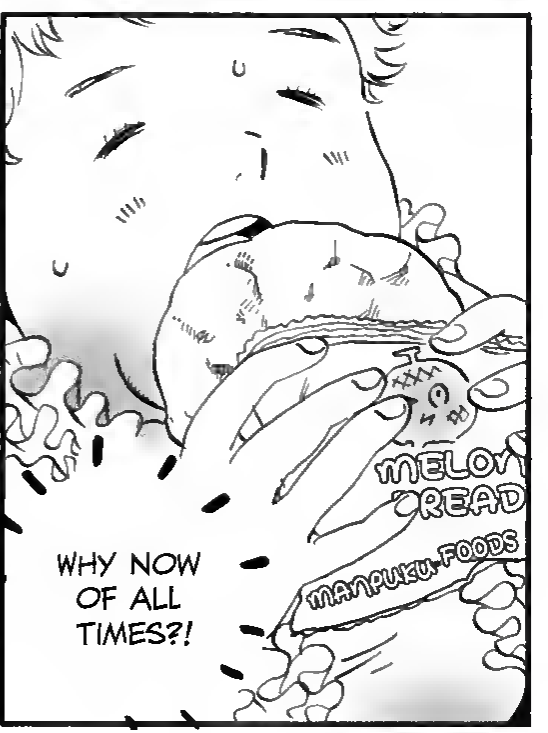


Ah...

カツン
TMP
PLEASE OBSERVE AS WE FOLLOW THE STORY OF THIS RARE, REGRETTABLE MAN...
...FROM BEGINNING TO END.
TMP
カツーン

Konno, huh.
FLIP
I forgot to buy myself a melon bread.
BNNN...
BNNN...
Hm?
FROM KONNO
I KNOW THIS IS SUDDEN, BUT WE'RE HAVING A GROUP DATE TONIGHT AT 7 IN SHINJUKU
I KNOW YOU'RE FREE, SO COME! (^0^)/ KONNO
Not again!
He's always such a pain in the ass.
IRRITATED
IRRITATED
BEEP
CALL YOU BACK AFTER WORK.
BEEP
BEEP
I'm going to stop him today, if it's the last thing I do.
And sent.
BEEP

もふ MUNCH
もふ MUNCH
もふ MUNCH
Don't savor that too much, or I'll start to regret it!
CLICK カチ
CLICK カチ
CLICK カチ
CLICK カチ
CLICK カチ

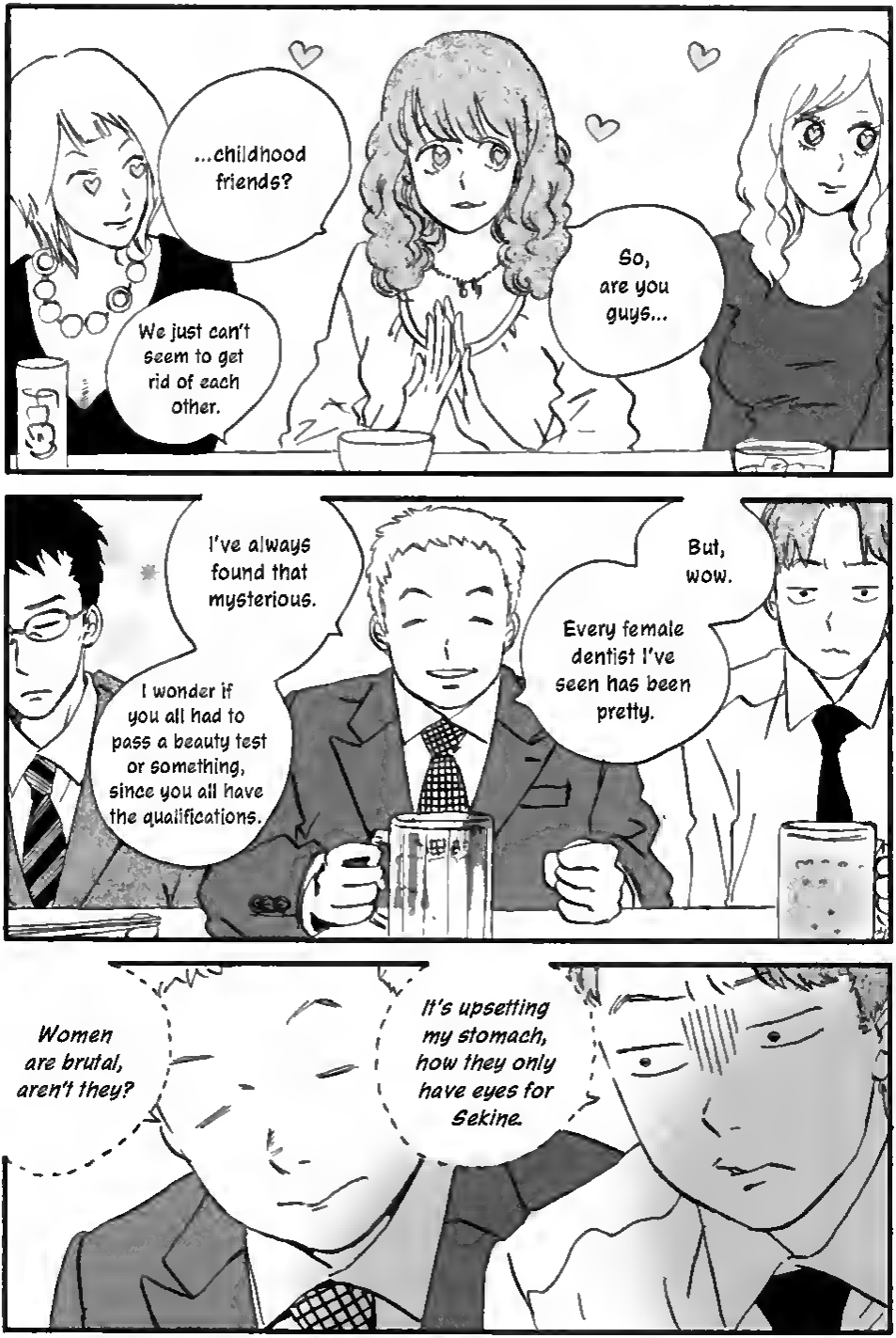

WHY NOW OF ALL TIMES?!
MELON BREAD
MANPUKU-FOODS

CLICK
CLICK
Wow, Mr. Sekine seems to be in a really bad mood.
But, I have to get him to sign these documents...
Isn't that how he usually looks?
Yeah, but.
Still...
I mean, he's been a hottie for thirty years.
There's no way he can't know that.
Right?
He *must* know he's hot, and is flaunting it.
You can say that again.
That's because he's naturally good-looking.
That slightly gloomy demeanor is kind of appealing.

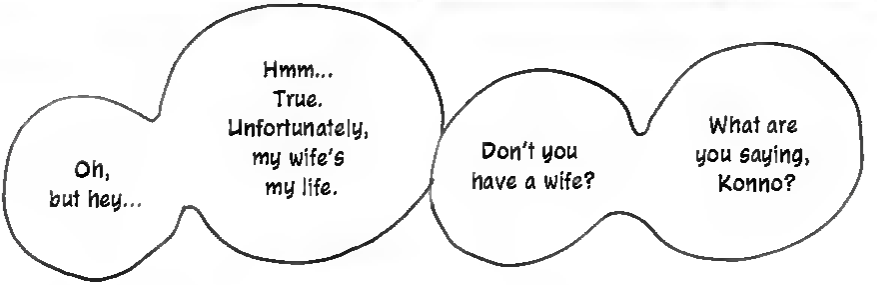
Come to think of it, have you ever seen him smile?
Nope!
The chances of seeing him smile are the same as the chances of seeing a Tsuchinoko.
Bwa ha ha!
Doesn't that make him an endangered species?
A natural treasure to look at.
Hey!

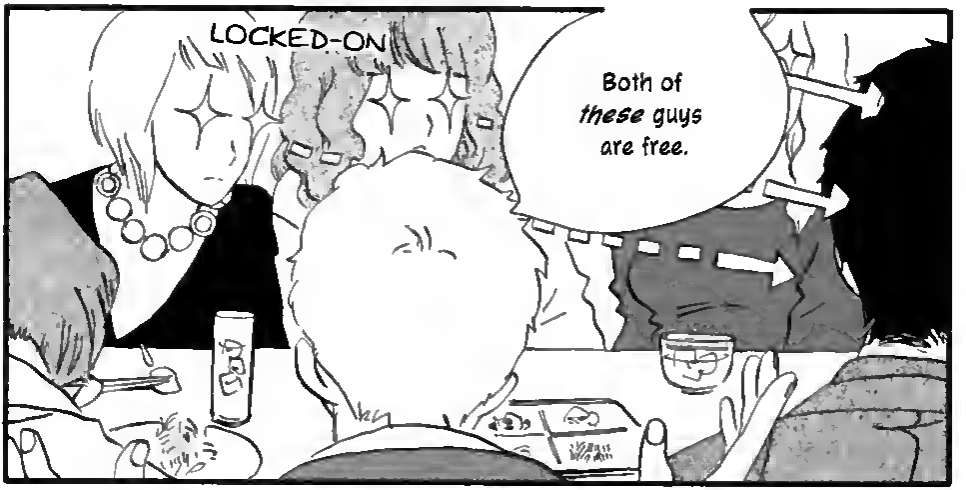
Why are you eating melon bread, too?!
And I was hungry.
What do you mean, *too*?
They were being sold over there.
はっ
AH!
Want some?
Although I've eaten half of it already...
Forget about that.
The food truck's already gone.
I'll go get one also!
You've got pretty bad luck, haven't you Sekine?

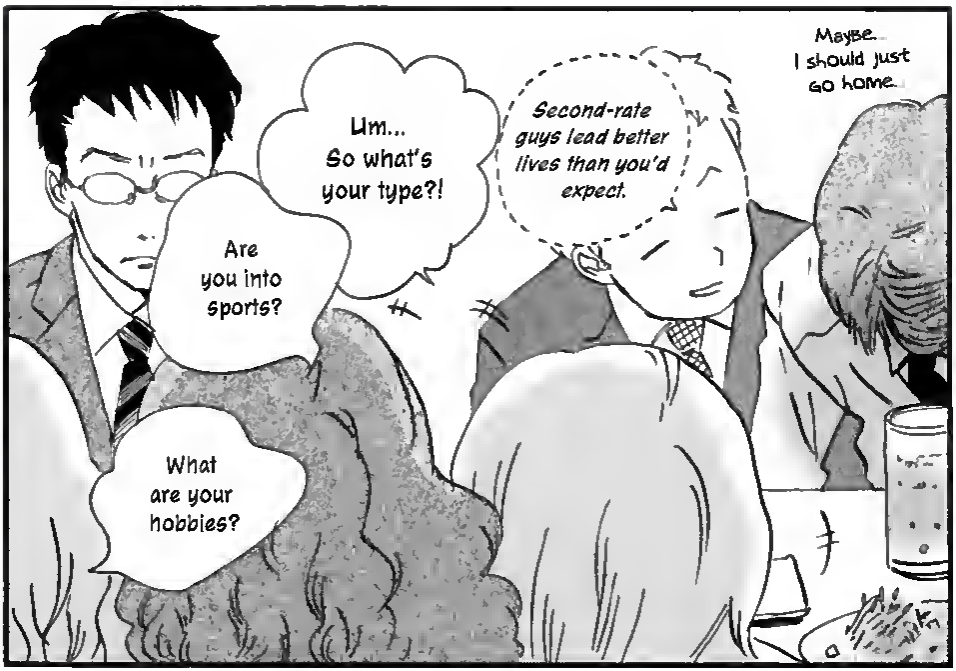
Going on group dates even though you're *married*...
And cheating on your wife with that teddy bear face...
It's disgusting I tell you.
I'm not cheating.
OK?
Kazune's the only one for me.
WHAM
Don't *OK* me!
Ow!


...childhood friends?
We just can't seem to get rid of each other.
So, are you guys...
I've always found that mysterious.
I wonder if you all had to pass a beauty test or something, since you all have the qualifications.
But, wow.
Every female dentist I've seen has been pretty.
Women are brutal, aren't they?
It's upsetting my stomach, how they only have eyes for Sekine.

I wish I had a dentist for a girlfriend.
I love that suction tube that dentists put in patients' mouths.
Then, she could give me regular checkups.
Came to make sure he doesn't cheat.

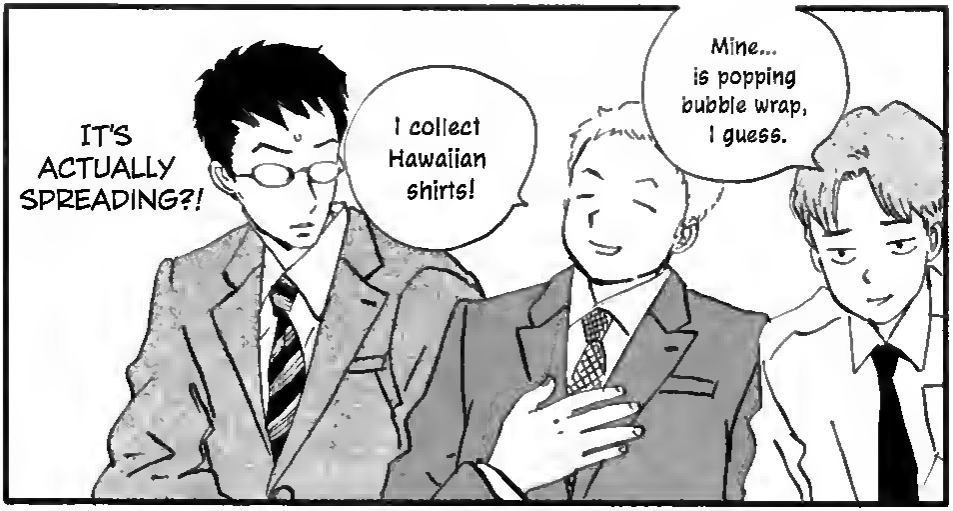

Oh, but hey...
Hmm... True. Unfortunately, my wife's my life.
Don't you have a wife?
What are you saying, Konno?


LOCKED-ON
Both of *these* guys are free.


Maybe... I should just go home.
Second-rate guys lead better lives than you'd expect.
Um... So what's your type?!
Are you into sports?
What are your hobbies?

I'M BEING BOMBARDED WITH A BUNCH OF POINTLESS QUESTIONS.

THIS ISN'T SOME INTERVIEW, SO I'M NOT GOING TO ANSWER EVERY ONE OF YOUR INANE QUESTIONS.
Before you ask someone what their interests are...
It's not natural. You'd probably be intimidated...
Nobody could beat him in sports and his grades were top-notch.
...if we told you the number of trophies he's won.
Wow...
HOW ANNOYING.
Ohh...
It's really frustrating how this guy here has always been good at everything he's ever done.
DAMN... I JUST OPENED UP A NEW CAN OF WORMS
I've been into scuba diving since college.
Oh!
Um...
I like mountain climbing and dressing up.
Mine's traveling, I guess.
I'M GOING TO TURN THE TABLES ON THEM...
...AND SHUT THEM UP.
...shouldn't you, at least...
...talk about yourselves first?


IT'S ACTUALLY SPREADING?!
I collect Hawaiian shirts!
Mine... is popping bubble wrap, I guess.

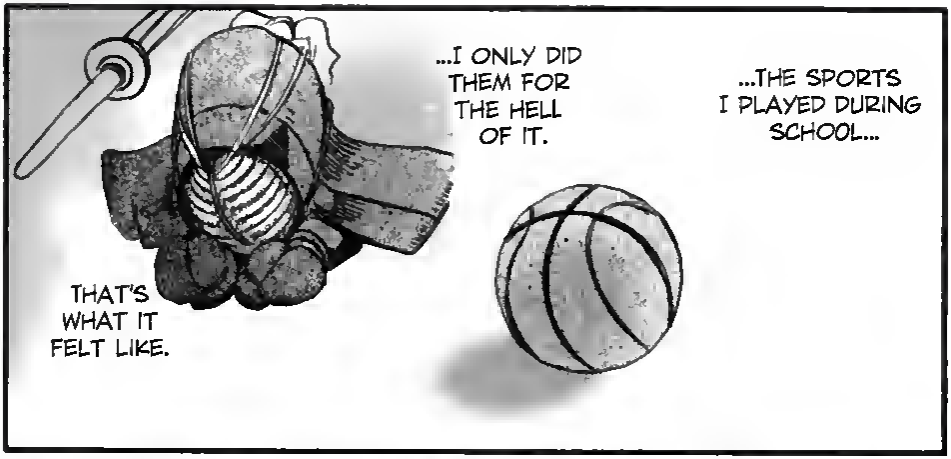
I GUESS A HOBBY CAN BE JUST ABOUT ANYTHING.
POP
I just have to think of something that I'm hooked on.

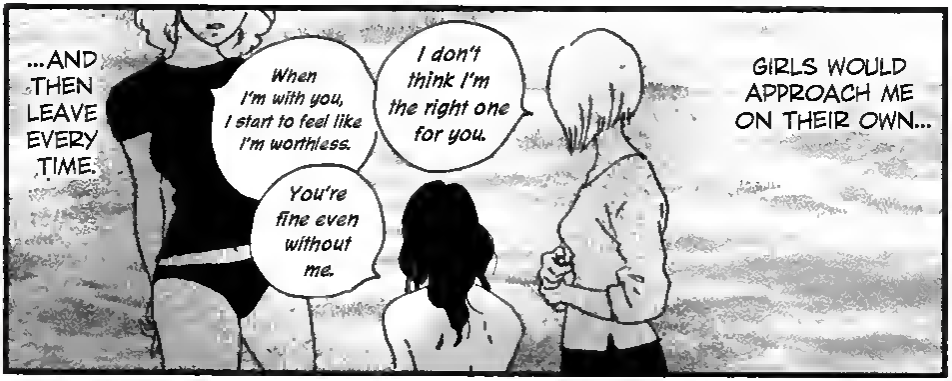
Come to think of it, during the summer...
...Konno always looks like Boo Takagi.
MY HOBBIES, HUH...
So he was collecting them...

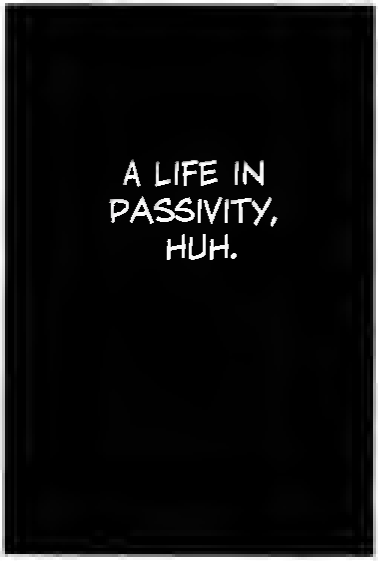
.....
HUH?
What about you, Mr. Sekine?

I'M...
Nothing really...
Maybe I have trouble concentrating.
...A PRETTY BORING GUY, AREN'T I?

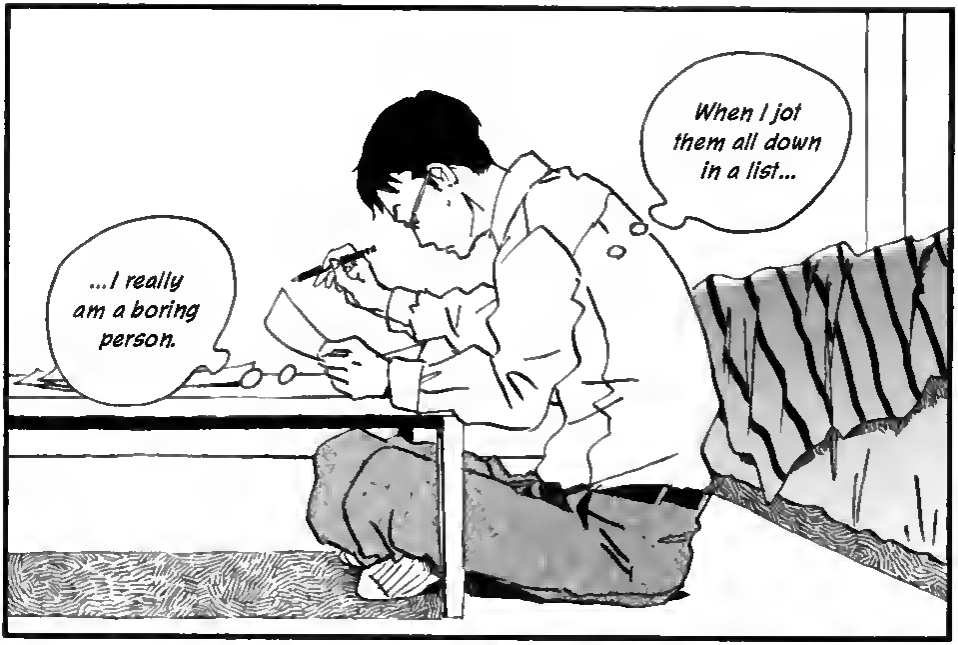
WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT...
I DON'T REMEMBER EVER BEING ENGROSSED IN ANYTHING.

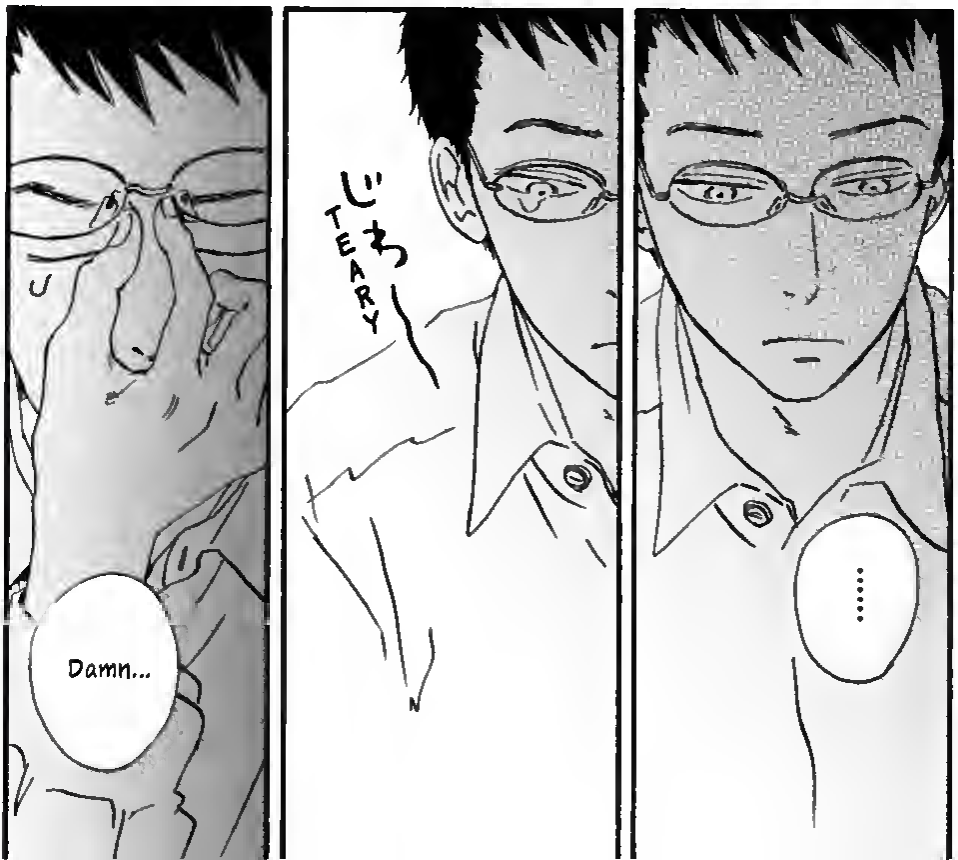

...I ONLY DID THEM FOR THE HELL OF IT.
...THE SPORTS I PLAYED DURING SCHOOL...
THAT'S WHAT IT FELT LIKE.

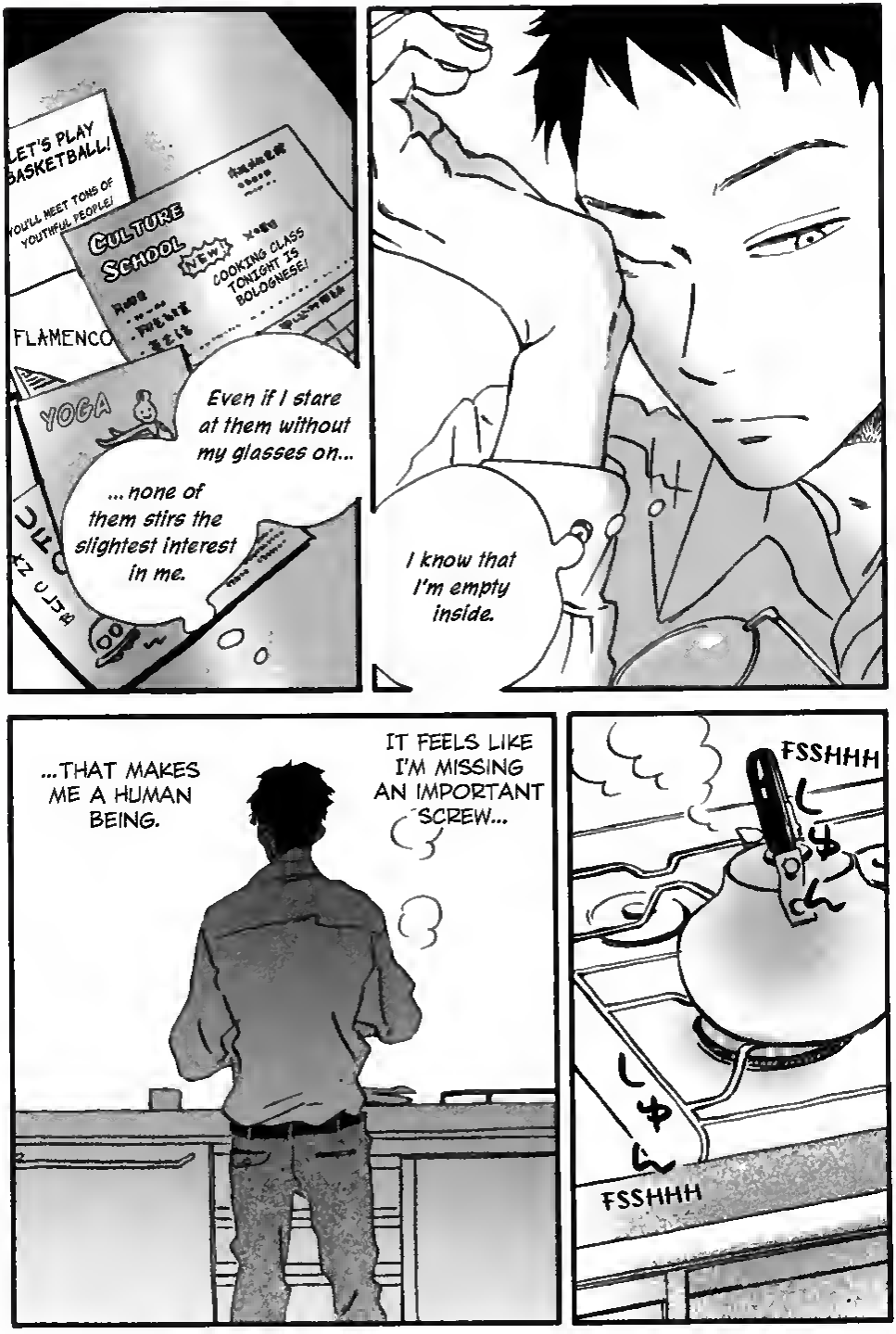

...AND THEN LEAVE EVERY TIME.
When I'm with you, I start to feel like I'm worthless.
I don't think I'm the right one for you.
You're fine even without me.
GIRLS WOULD APPROACH ME ON THEIR OWN...

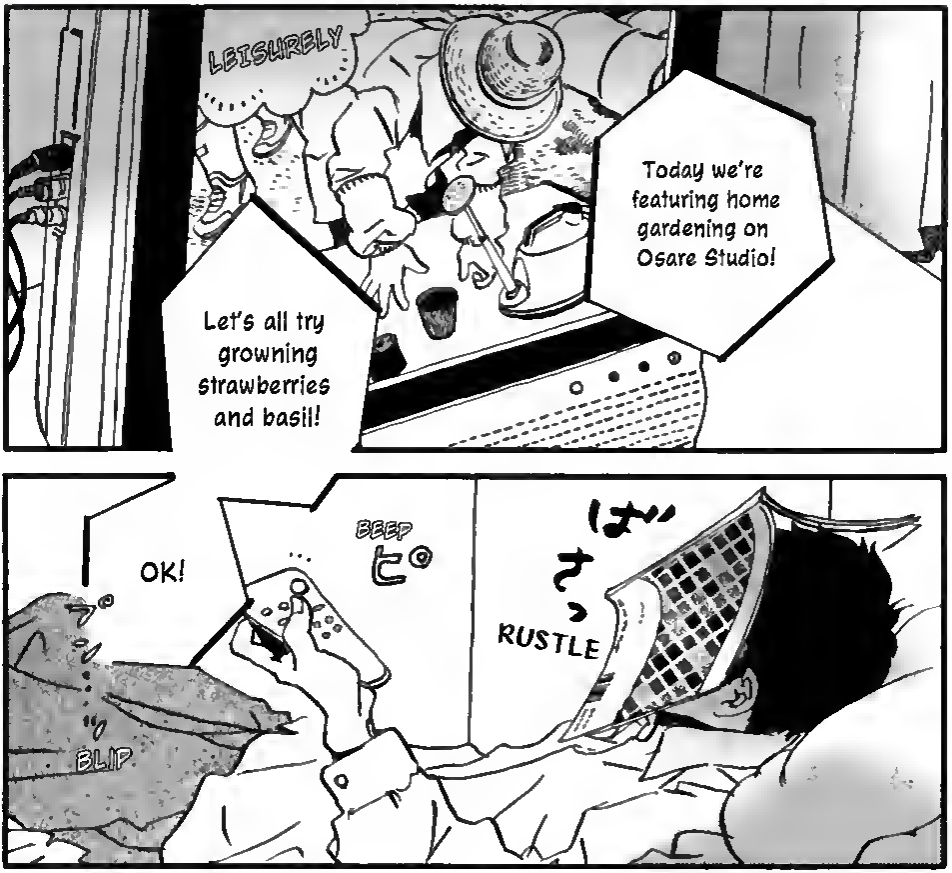

A LIFE IN PASSIVITY, HUH.

THEY WERE JUST ROLES THAT WERE PLACED UPON ME.
PRESIDENT.
LOVER.
TEAM CAPTAIN.
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.


When I jot them all down in a list...
...I really am a boring person.


じわ
TEARY
Damn...
.....


LET'S PLAY BASKETBALL!
YOU'LL MEET TONS OF YOUTHFUL PEOPLE!
CULTURE SCHOOL
NEW
COOKING CLASS TONIGHT IS BOLOGNESE!
FLAMENCO
YOGA
Even if I stare at them without my glasses on...
...none of them stirs the slightest interest in me.
I know that I'm empty inside.
...THAT MAKES ME A HUMAN BEING.
IT FEELS LIKE I'M MISSING AN IMPORTANT SCREW...
FSSHHH
FSSHHH


LEISURELY
Today we're featuring home gardening on Osare Studio!
Let's all try growning strawberries and basil!
OK!
BEEP
ピ
RUSTLE
BLIP

For starters...
BOO
...I guess I'll start with this.
POT HOLDER
ROUND POUCH

KI SA RA GI YA
キ サ ラ ギ ヤ
KNITTING WOOL / HANDICRAFTS

Yes?

What do you want?
What, you say...
I came to buy yarn...
CLATTER
カ'
タ
...and knitting needles.
Huh?!

CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
...there's been no end to these hotshots coming around forcing evictions for redevelopment.
It's just that lately, around this whole district...
Yes.
So you're a customer, are you?
Oh, dear. I do apologize.
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
I'll open up the shop now.
Please wait a moment.

Mochi Mochi Hall Magic Co.
Dear me! Welcome!
Thank you for waiting.
Now, now.
That's no good, sir.
sigh

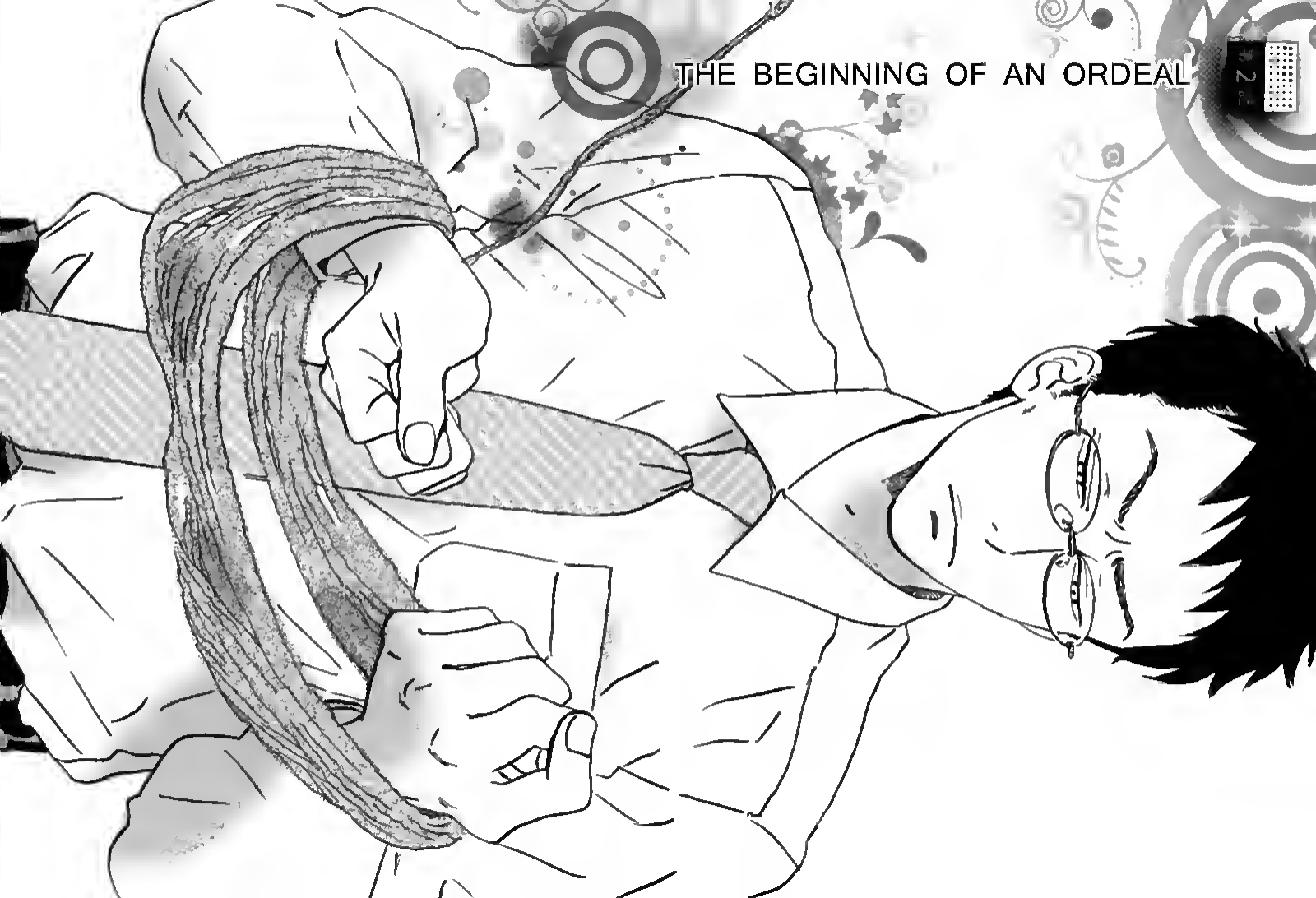
Sighing is taboo!
Your happiness will run away from you!
Now, then. What would you like?
Forget about the street performance.
Please just sell me some yarn.
Uh...
What?
.....

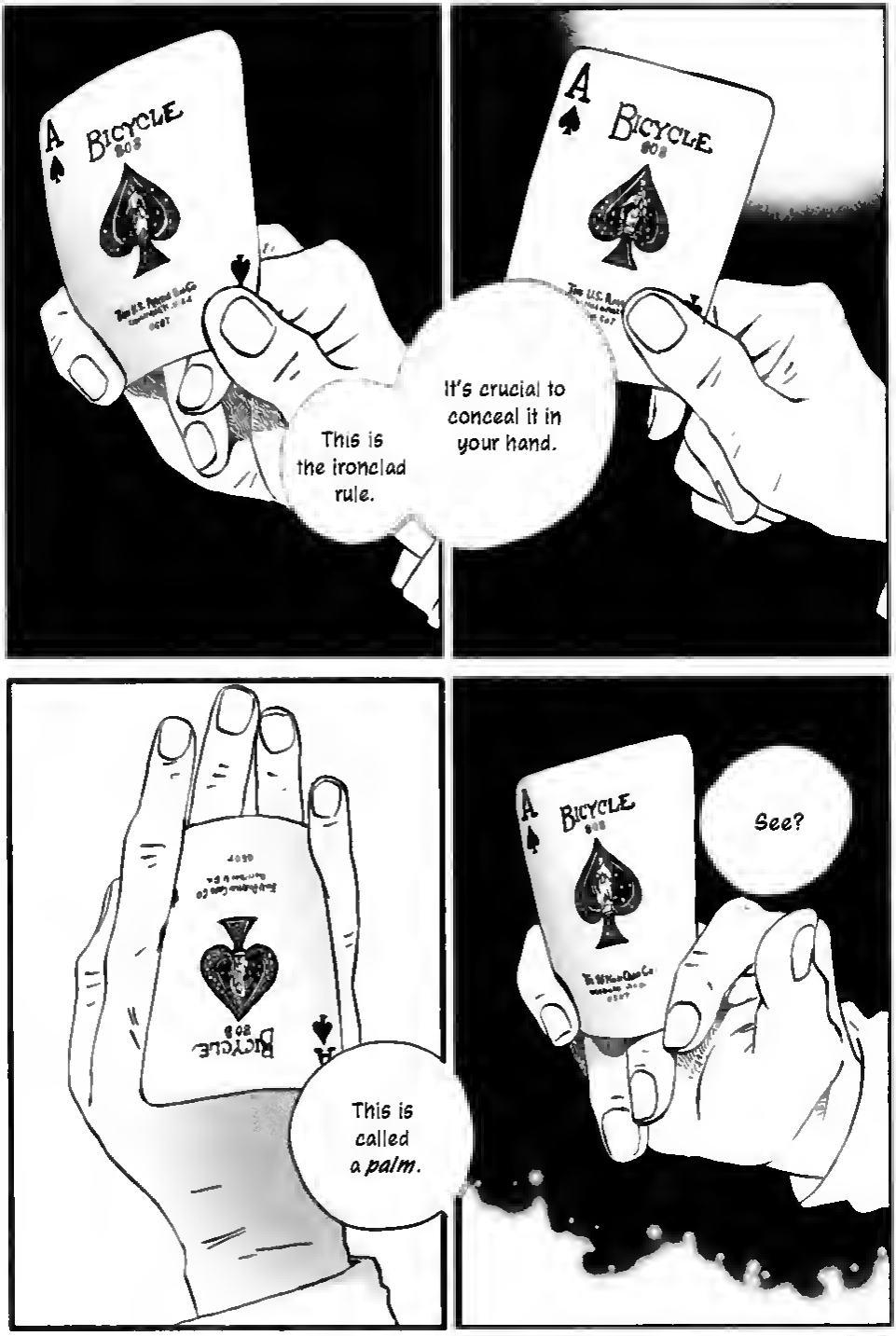
Hey.
Are you listening?
Mochi
What's wrong?
Why aren't you moving?
What the...?
FLINCH
ヒッ
Geez!
JANGLE
カラ〜ン
コロ〜
JANGLE
Huh?

You opened the shop without my permission again!
Grandpa!

Are you his granddaughter?
Huh?
Um, this is...
Don't!
Don't get any closer, mister!

Grandpa can't resist good-looking people.
Ohh...
WEST
ぶちゅー
SMOOCH!
Ahh...
See?
Ho ho ho!
Told you so.

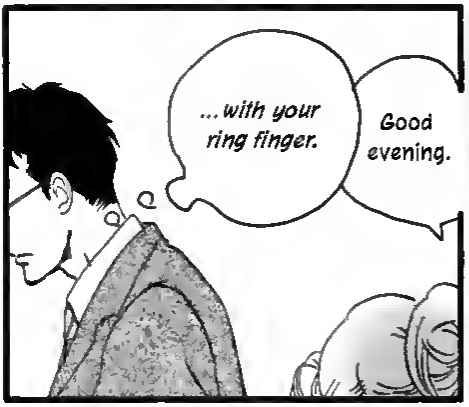


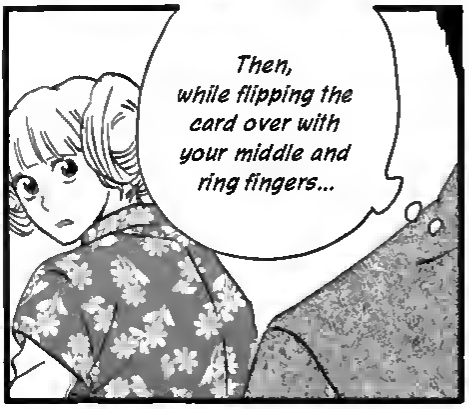

A
BICYCLE
This is the ironclad rule.
It's crucial to conceal it in your hand.
This is called a *palm*.
See?

At first, it seemed like the card had disappeared all of a sudden.
I BELIEVE I CAME HERE...
...TO BUY SOME YARN.
So this is what...
KNITTING WO

...they mean by handicrafts.
FOR ABOUT AN HOUR EVERY FRIDAY...
...I LEARN MAGIC TRICKS.
Did you get that?
I think so.
Let's do some trick shuffling.
Are you sure that you only need to watch?
For the most part.

HANDICRA
I'M NOT SURE IF PAYING THIS GEEZER TWELVE DOLLARS PER TRICK...
I'll see you again next week.
...IS REASONABLE OR NOT.
Using your pinky...

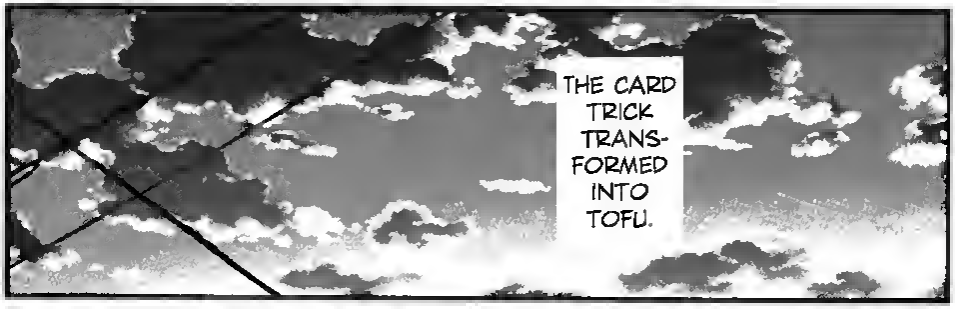

...with your ring finger.
Good evening.

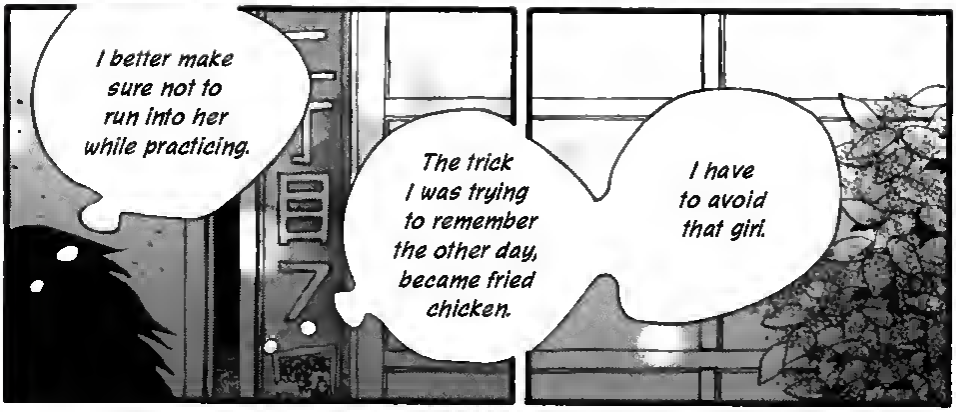

Then, while flipping the card over with your middle and ring fingers...

...pinch the index of the card at an angle where there's no printing...

Using your index finger, quickly from the side of the card...
Good evening!
HUH?
ヒク
FLINCH
VISUALIZATION TRAINING
DON'T SHOUT!
You came to see Grandpa again, mister?
I'LL FORGET ONE OF THE STEPS!
Yes.
You're unusual.

Here. You can have some.
RUSTLE
Great...
Using your index finger, quickly...
Oh.
Perfect timing.
Quickly ...
Would you like some really delicious tofu?


THE CARD TRICK TRANS-FORMED INTO TOFU.


I better make sure not to run into her while practicing.
The trick I was trying to remember the other day, became fried chicken.
I have to avoid that girl.

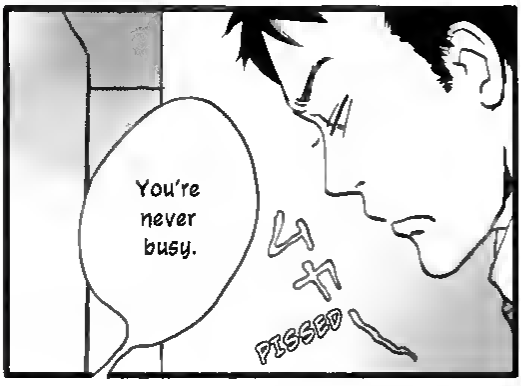
I just wonder if there will ever come a day...
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M HOOKED ON IT OR ANYTHING.
...when I'll be enthusiastic about doing these tricks.

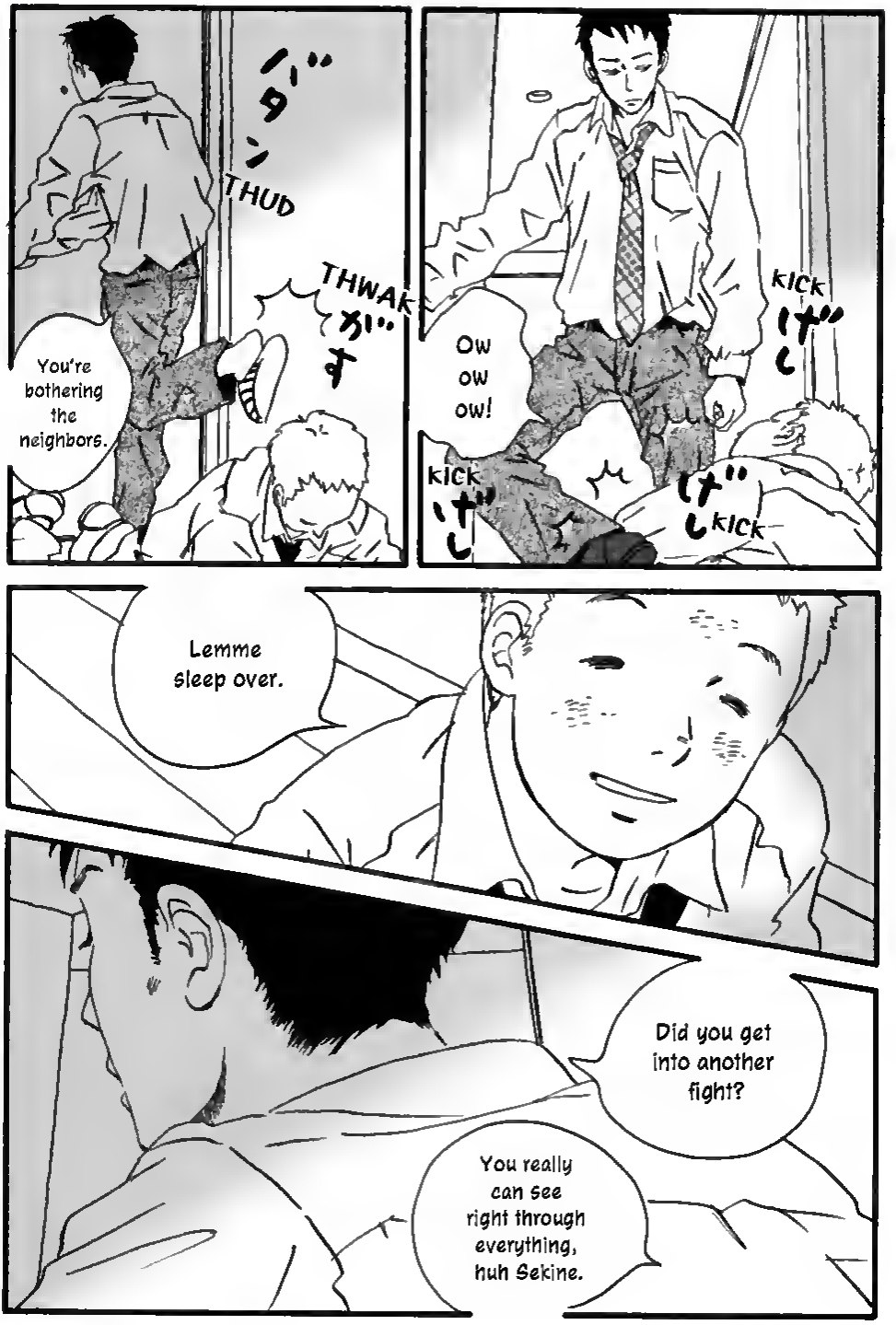
...in the first place?
DING DONG
DING DONG
Who is it?
RATTLE
DING DONG
Anyway.
How did I end up like this...
DING DONG
DING DONG
DING DONG
DING DONG
DING DONG
Ugh!
BANG
BANG
DING DONG
DING DONG
Coming this late at night...
What a nut!
Ignore it. Ignore it.
DING DONG
DING DONG

KA-
CHAK
Idiot!
Oh!

BANG
Sekine!
BANG
BANG
Konno, huh.

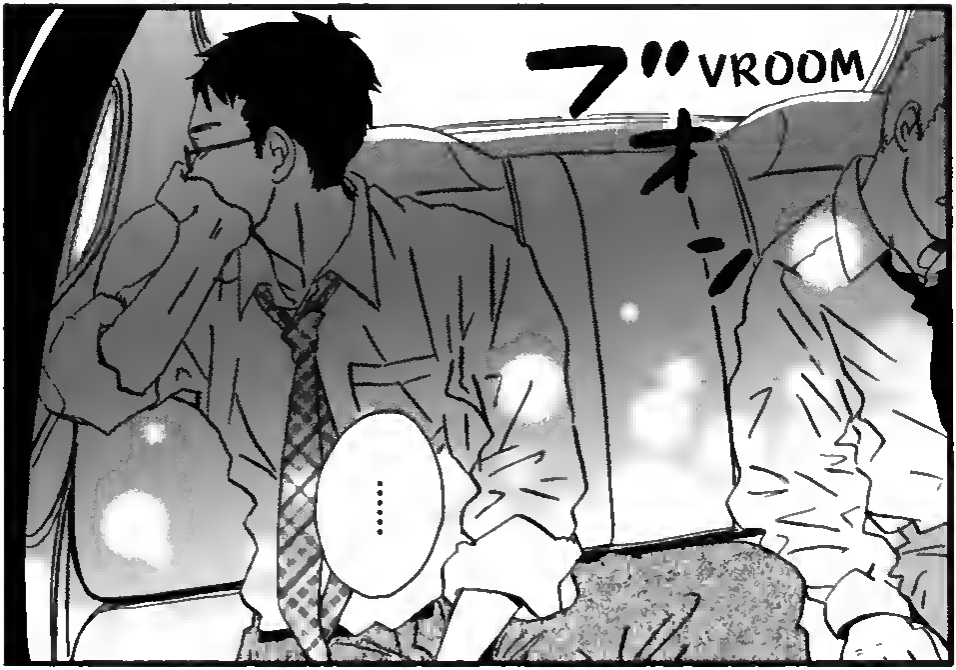
Heh heh. I knew you'd be home!

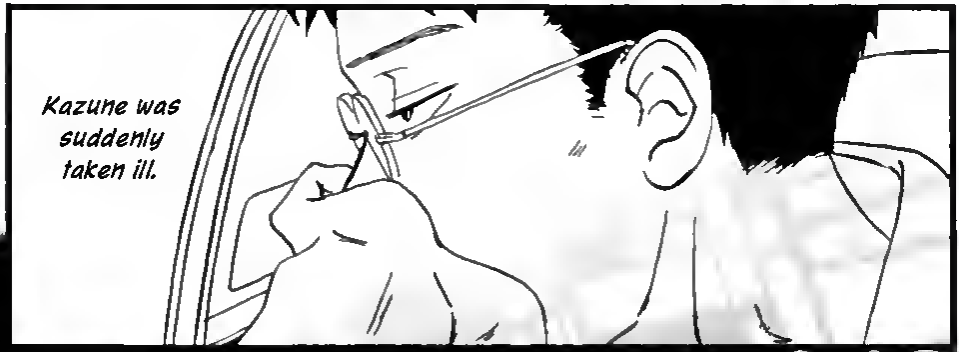

You're never busy.
PISSED


THUD
THWAK
You're bothering the neighbors.
Ow ow ow!
KICK
KICK
KICK
Lemme sleep over.
Did you get into another fight?
You really can see right through everything, huh Sekine.

SHUFFLE
ダッ
SHUFFLE
ダッ
All I wanted...
She kicked me out after I became a member at the Happening Bar.
...was for us to go there together...
ばしゃん
SPLASH
That was all.
SPLASH
ばしゃ

I'll call a taxi.
Go home by yourself.
Sekine...
You've always been...
...bad at dealing with Kazune, huh
No surprise there, I guess...
Come with me.
Hell no.


VROOM
ブォン
……


Kazune was suddenly taken ill.

I bet it's that, right?
Anorexia!
DING DONG!

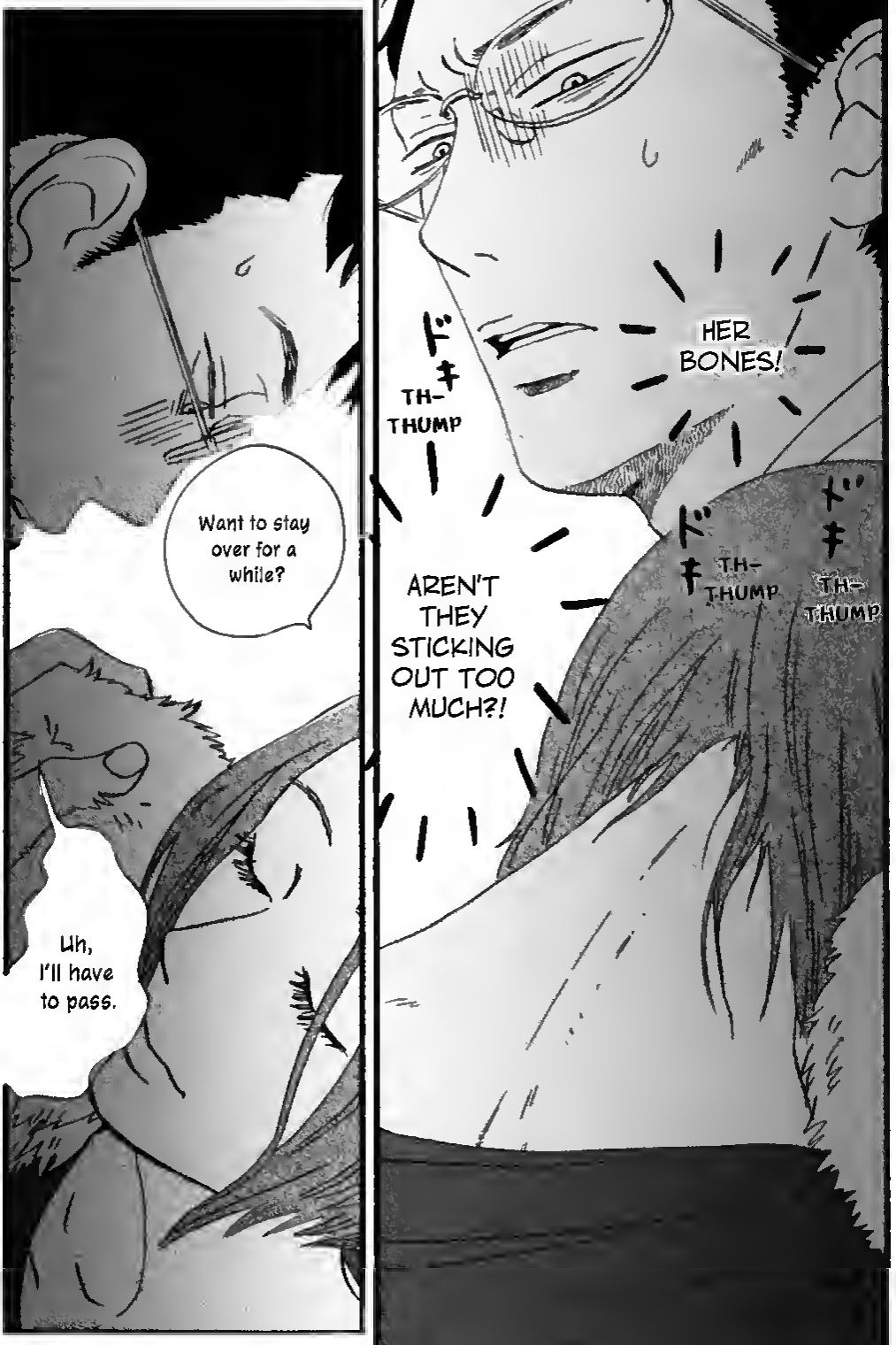
She's sure got it rough.
I heard that she's also modeling to make money for the family.
Her parents apparently ran into some trouble.
Sounds like a daytime soap opera!
CLATTER
カチャ
THAT'S WHEN I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF HER.
BACK THEN I HAPPENED TO HAVE GONE THERE TO GET SOME BAND-AIDS.
VASELINE
ガラ
RATTLE

HER ARMS WERE PALE AND EMACIATED.
AND I BECAME STRANGELY TERRIFIED.

SLAM
MIVA
TAXI
EVER SINCE THEN...
SCREECH
You reek of alcohol...
Heh heh.
I'VE HAD...
Sekine?
ERK

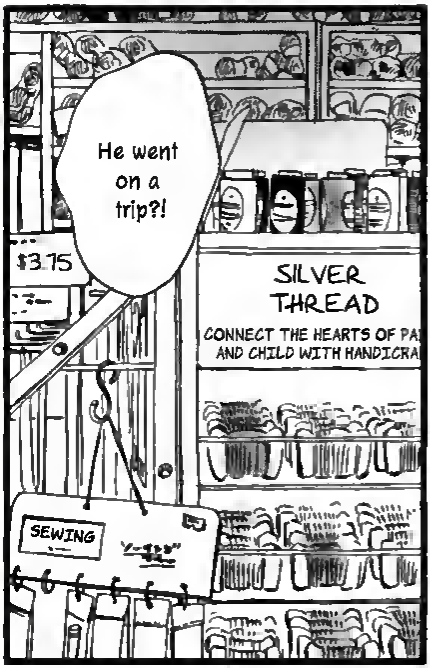
Sorry for troubling you every time.
...TROUBLE DEALING WITH SCRAWNY WOMEN.
WHEN I LOOK AT THEM...
...I IMAGINE THEIR JOINTS BREAKING WITH A SNAP...
...AND THEIR BODIES FOLDED UP INTO A PACKAGE.
Hello...

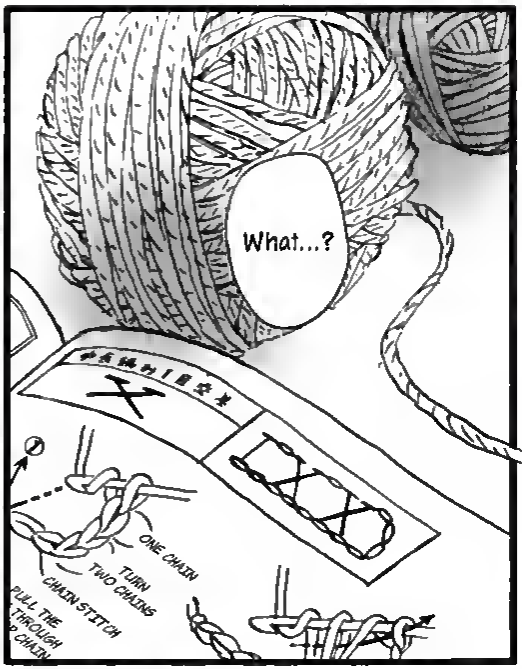
He asked me if I wanted to go.
Can you believe that?
You heard about the Happening Bar, right?
TMP
Wake up
Hey, now.
Konno.
SLAP
SLAP
SHUDDER
SHUDDER
SHUDDER
There we go.
SLUMP


Want to stay over for a while?
Uh, I'll have to pass.
ドキ
TH-THUMP
HER BONES!
AREN'T THEY STICKING OUT TOO MUCH?!
ドキ
TH-THUMP
ドキ
TH-THUMP

Are you all right, sir?
VROOOM
ブロロロ
I CAN'T BREATHE.
Those two.
Don't they eat the same things?
Did you change your mind?
Kazune ...!
WHAM
ゴン

...COMPARED TO WHEN SHE WAS ALL SKIN AND BONES...
...SHE LOOKS A LOT BETTER NOW.
COME TO THINK OF IT...


He went on a trip?!
$3.75
SILVER THREAD
CONNECT THE HEARTS OF PA
AND CHILD WITH HANDICRA
SEWING

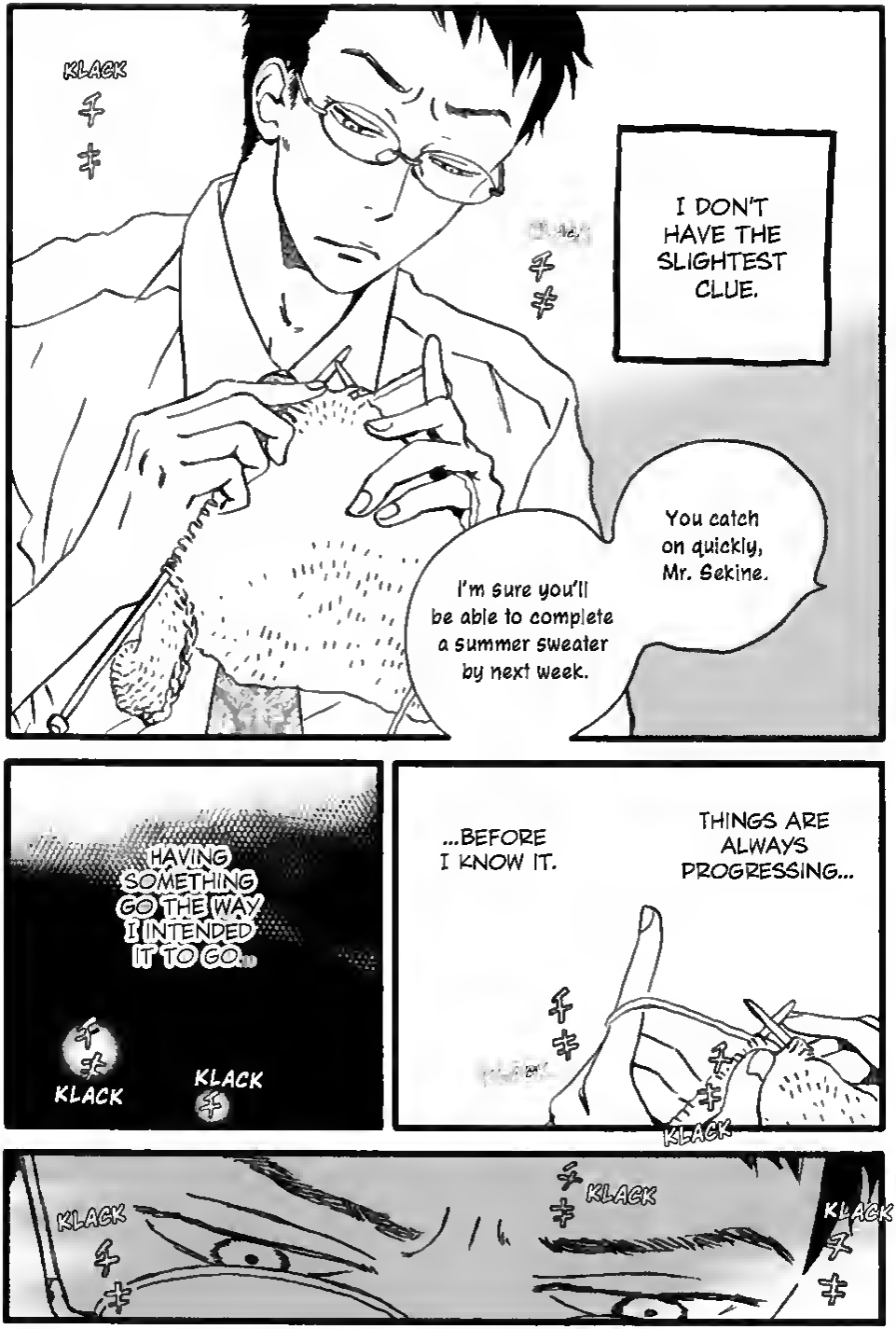

What...?
ONE CHAIN
TURN
TWO CHAINS
CHAIN STITCH
PULL THE
THROUGH
P CHAIN

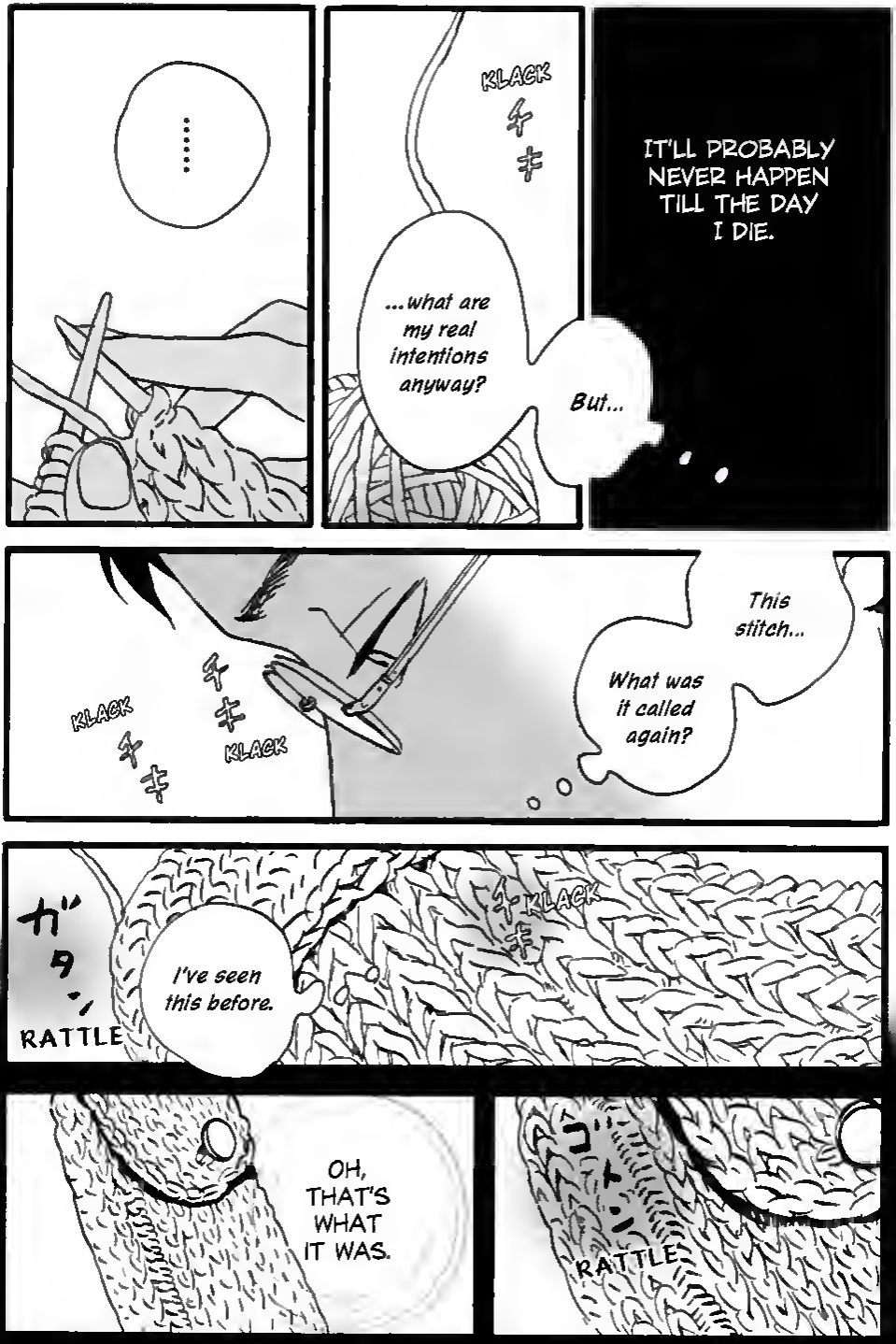
Do you want to continue?
Or take a break instead?
What would you like to do?

Yes.
He said he'll be gone for a while.
How could he just up and leave?
I was asked to take over your handicraft classes.

Half a year?!
That's a bit...
All right, then.
Hmm...
Maybe half a year?
Around how long will the break be?
SO WHEN SHE SAYS HANDICRAFTS...
We'll give him a big surprise!
How about we knit as much as we can until Grandpa comes back?
CLAP

...in asking that now.
...SHE DOESN'T MEAN MAGIC TRICKS?
I guess there's no point...
WE'RE FINALLY AT THE HEIGHT OF SUMMER.
WITH THE MYSTERIOUS GRANDDAUGHTER OF MY MYSTERIOUS TEACHER...
...I'VE KNITTED COUNTLESS CHAINS.
HOW DID THINGS END UP THIS WAY?

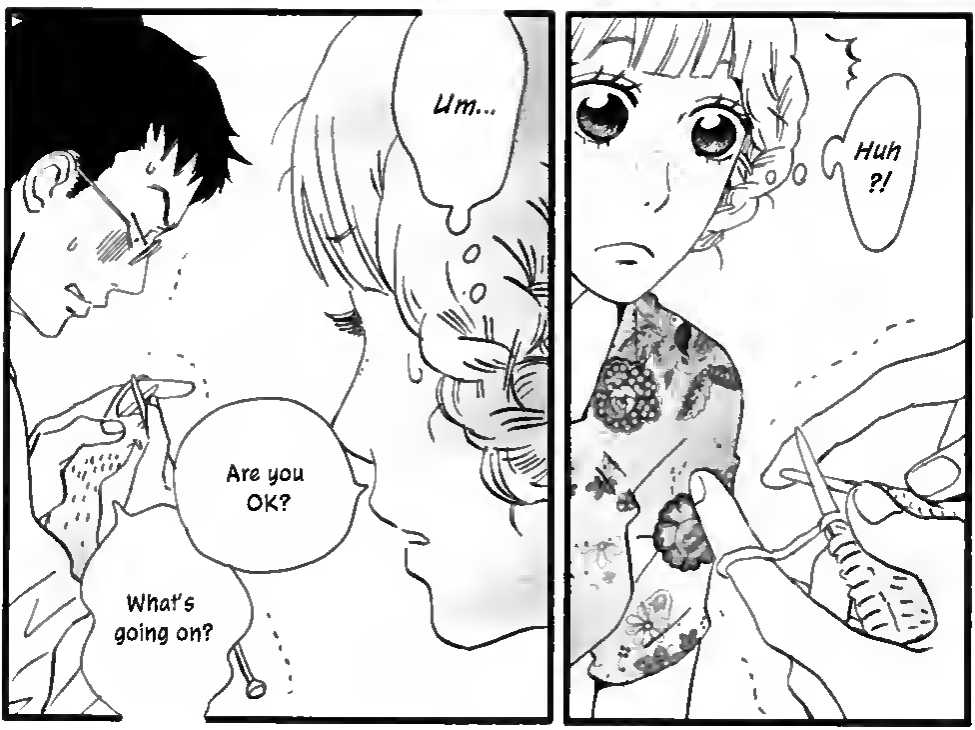

KLACK
I DON'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST CLUE.
You catch on quickly, Mr. Sekine.
I'm sure you'll be able to complete a summer sweater by next week.
HAVING SOMETHING GO THE WAY I INTENDED IT TO GO...
KLACK
KLACK
...BEFORE I KNOW IT.
THINGS ARE ALWAYS PROGRESSING...
KLACK
KLACK
KLACK
KLACK


.....
KLACK
カチ
...what are my real intentions anyway?
But...
IT'LL PROBABLY NEVER HAPPEN TILL THE DAY I DIE.
KLACK
カチ
KLACK
カチ
What was it called again?
This stitch...
ガラン
RATTLE
I've seen this before.
KLACK
カチ
OH, THAT'S WHAT IT WAS.
ガラン
RATTLE

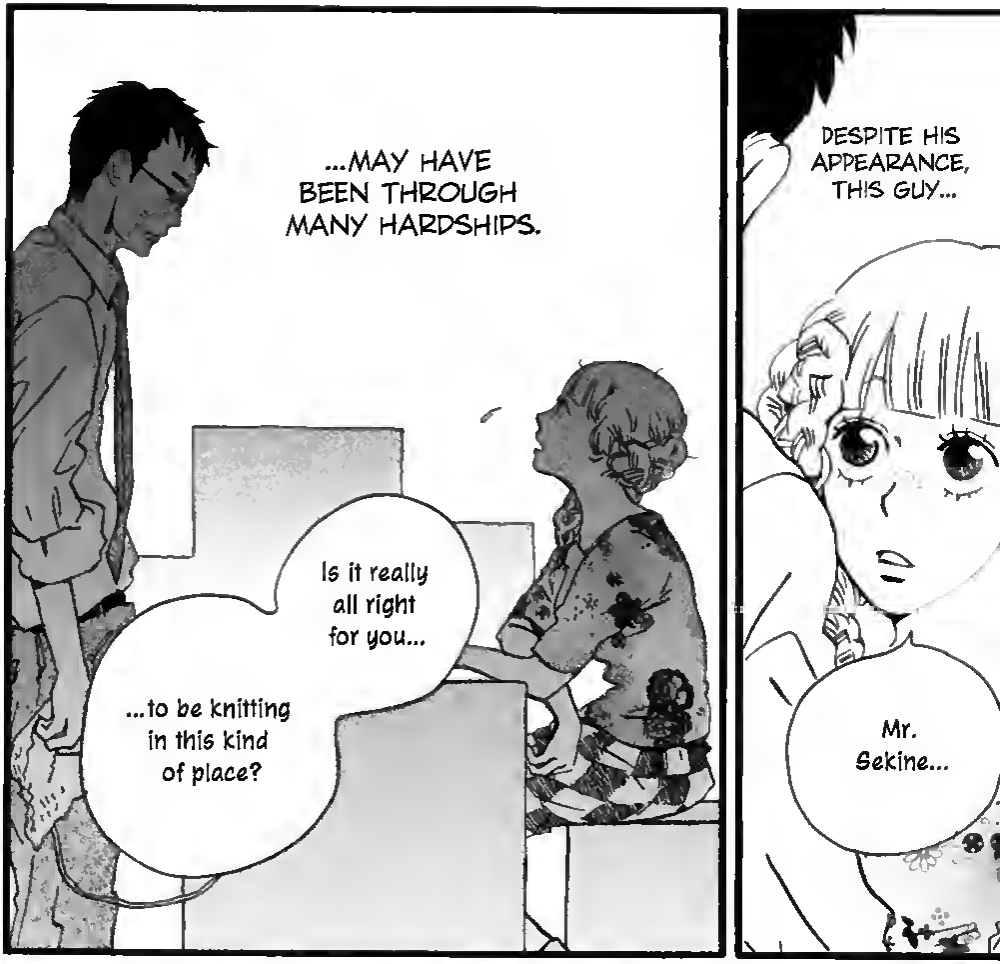
So he has an abacus.
カタン
RATTLE
AN ABACUS CASE.
There are two of them today.
カタコト
RATTLE
RATTLE
はあ
HUFF
はあ
HUFF
ガタコトー
RATTLE
カタコトー
RATTLE
How nice.

HUFF
はあ
…
HUFF
はあ

What's wrong?
SOB

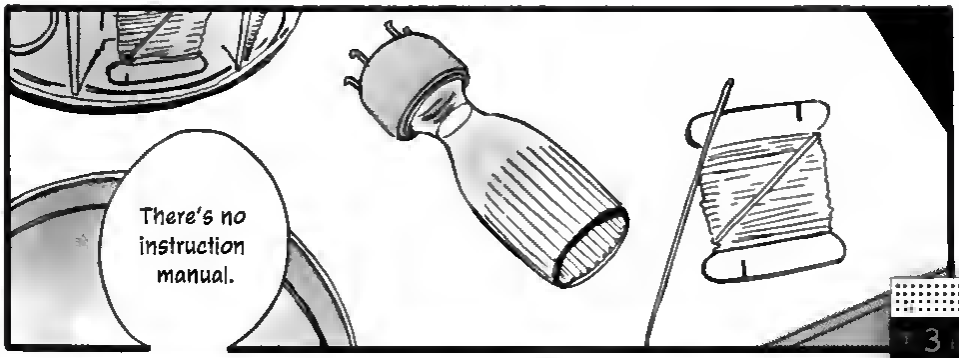

Um...
Are you OK?
What's going on?
Huh ?!

I can't concentrate on what I'm doing.
When I'm just moving repetitively...
...my mind starts filling with nothing but unnecessary things.
This doesn't seem right.
FLUSTERED
あぶぶぶ
I can't make doves fly...
...more *liberating*, like making doves fly out of a hat?
Isn't there something...
What does this guy want to do?!
Um... How about...
...we try something a little more complicated?
I'll teach you something with lots of stitches to keep your fingers busy.
Yes.
Please do.

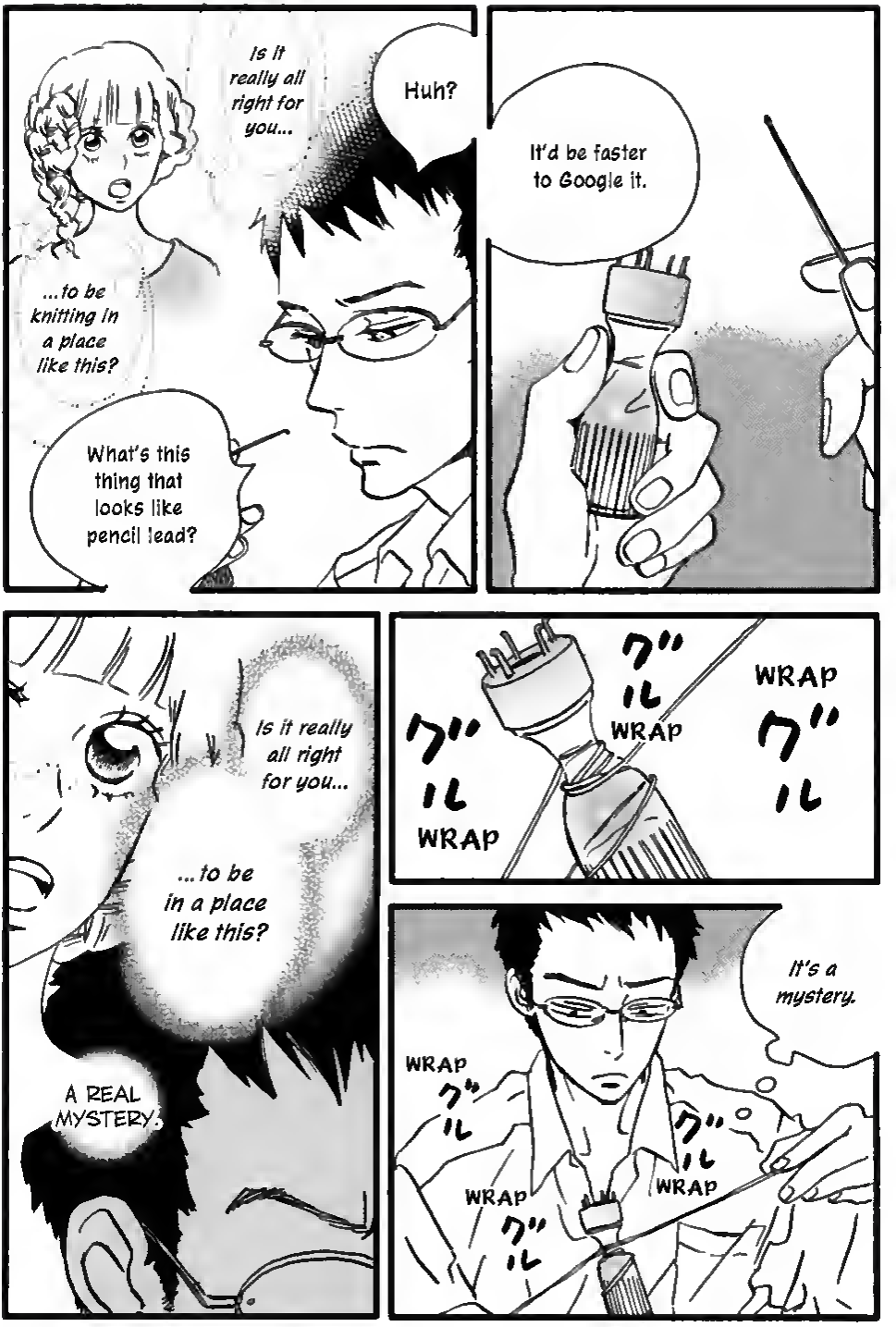

...MAY HAVE BEEN THROUGH MANY HARDSHIPS.
Is it really all right for you...
...to be knitting in this kind of place?
DESPITE HIS APPEARANCE, THIS GUY...
Mr. Sekine...

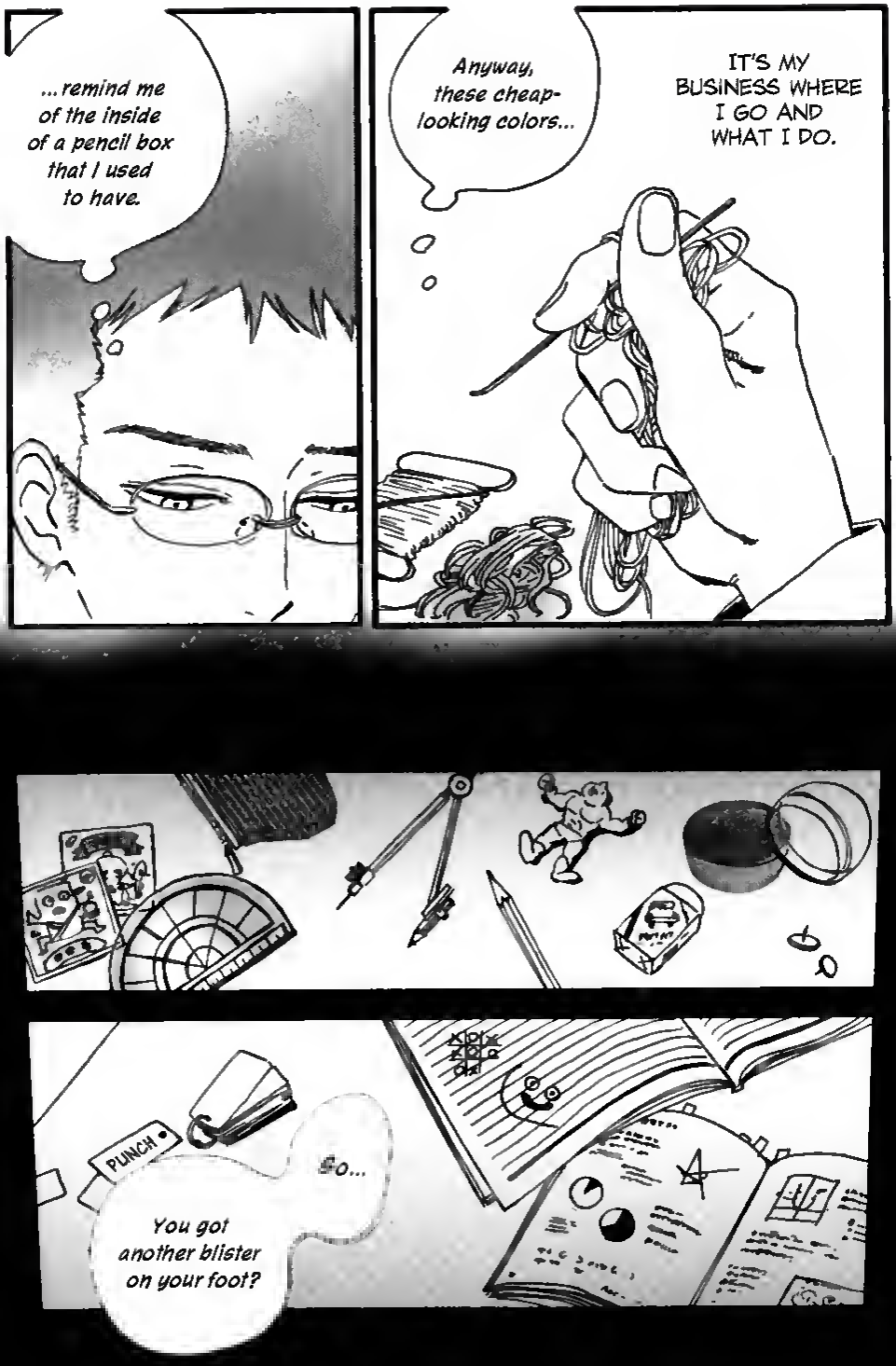
HUH?!
.....

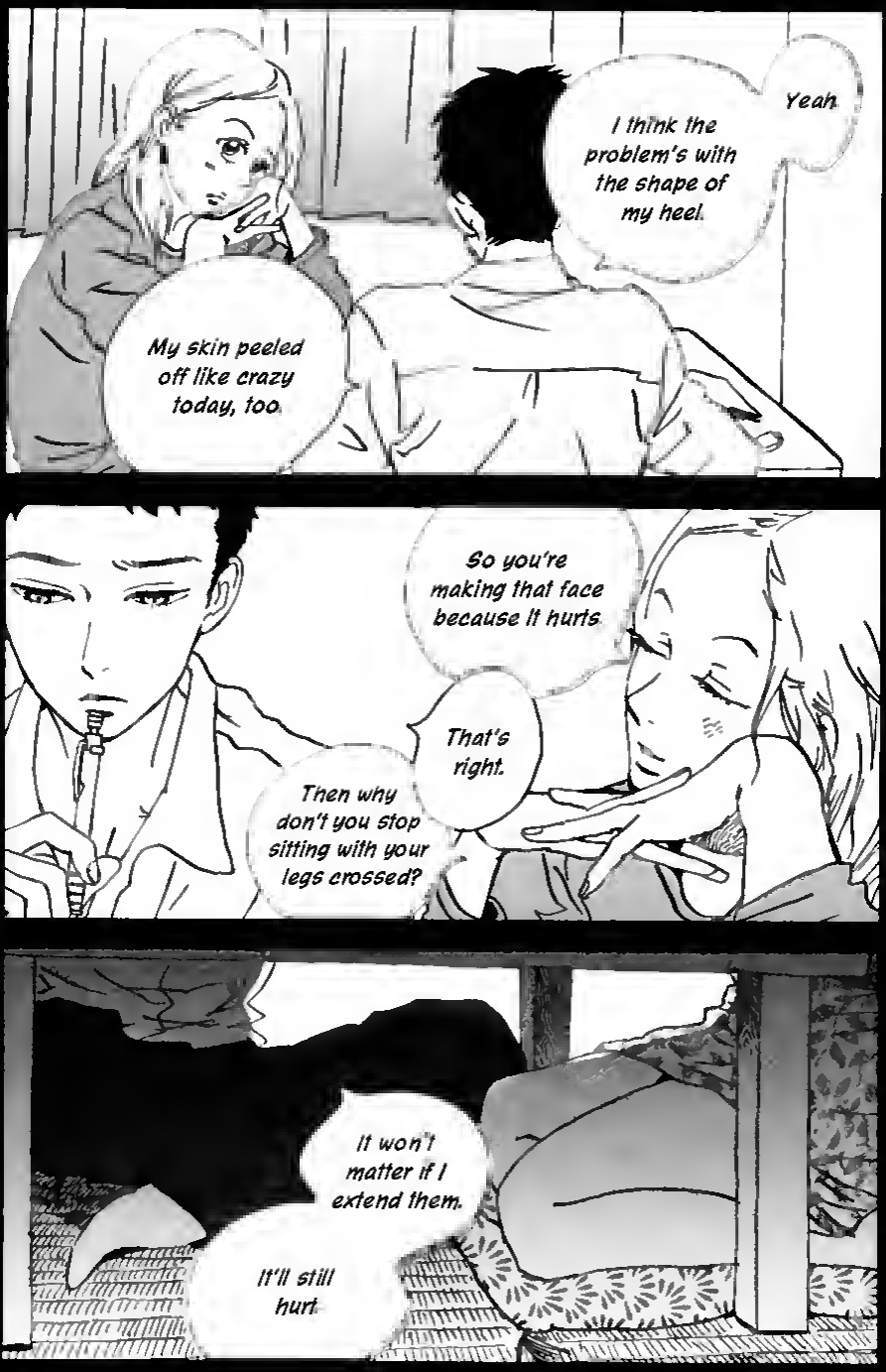
Would you like to borrow...
...my *tranquilizer*?
WHEN I WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE, MY HANDICRAFTS INSTRUCTOR, THE GRAND-DAUGHTER...
...BLURTED OUT SOMETHING IRREGULAR AND HANDED HER *LOOM* TO ME...
LOVELY HANDICRAFT


There's no instruction manual.

Am I supposed to figure it out by myself?


Is it really all right for you...
Huh?
...to be knitting in a place like this?
What's this thing that looks like pencil lead?
It'd be faster to Google it.
Is it really all right for you...
...to be in a place like this?
A REAL MYSTERY.
グル
WRAP
グル
WRAP
グル
WRAP
It's a mystery.
WRAP
グル
WRAP
グル
WRAP
グル


...remind me of the inside of a pencil box that I used to have.
Anyway, these cheap-looking colors...
IT'S MY BUSINESS WHERE I GO AND WHAT I DO.
PUNCH
So...
You got another blister on your foot?


Yeah.
I think the problem's with the shape of my heel.
My skin peeled off like crazy today, too.
So you're making that face because it hurts.
That's right.
Then why don't you stop sitting with your legs crossed?
It won't matter if I extend them.
It'll still hurt.

Come on.
Your teacher here knows a way that'll stop the pain.
Ow!
Does it hurt that bad?
Yeah.
Lemme see.
No way.
Don't pressure me, teacher.

I'll give you a gold star.
Is there something wrong with your head?
Bingo!
SKIRTCH
SKIRTCH
SKIRTCH
See?
The pain flew away.
If you don't show me your blister, I'll slit my throat.
I get it already so put that dangerous thing away!
You mean my boobs?
Huh?!
CLICK
CLICK

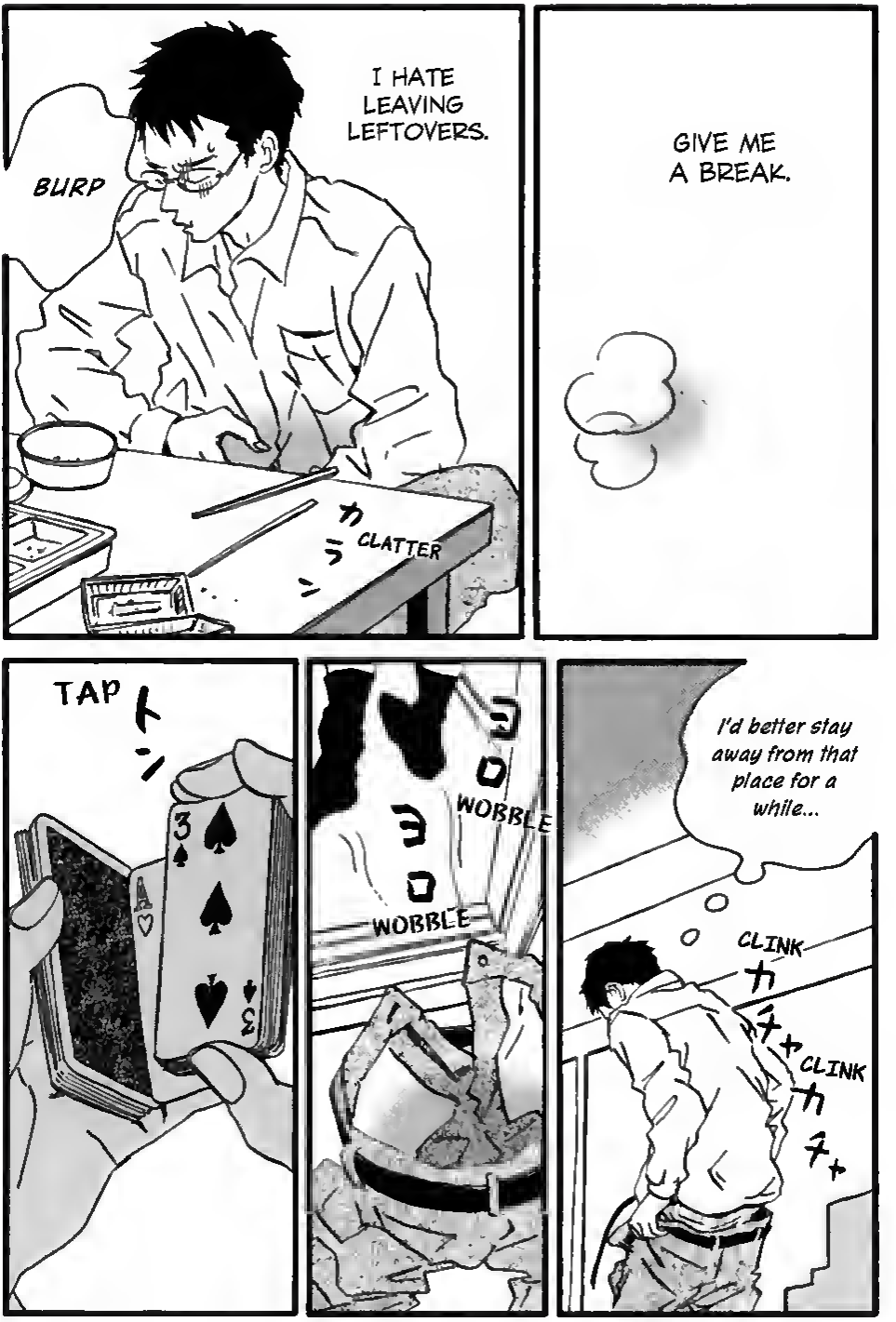
All better...
That's not where my blister is.
AND EVERYTHING GOT TANGLED UP.
THINGS HAPPENED AT RANDOM.

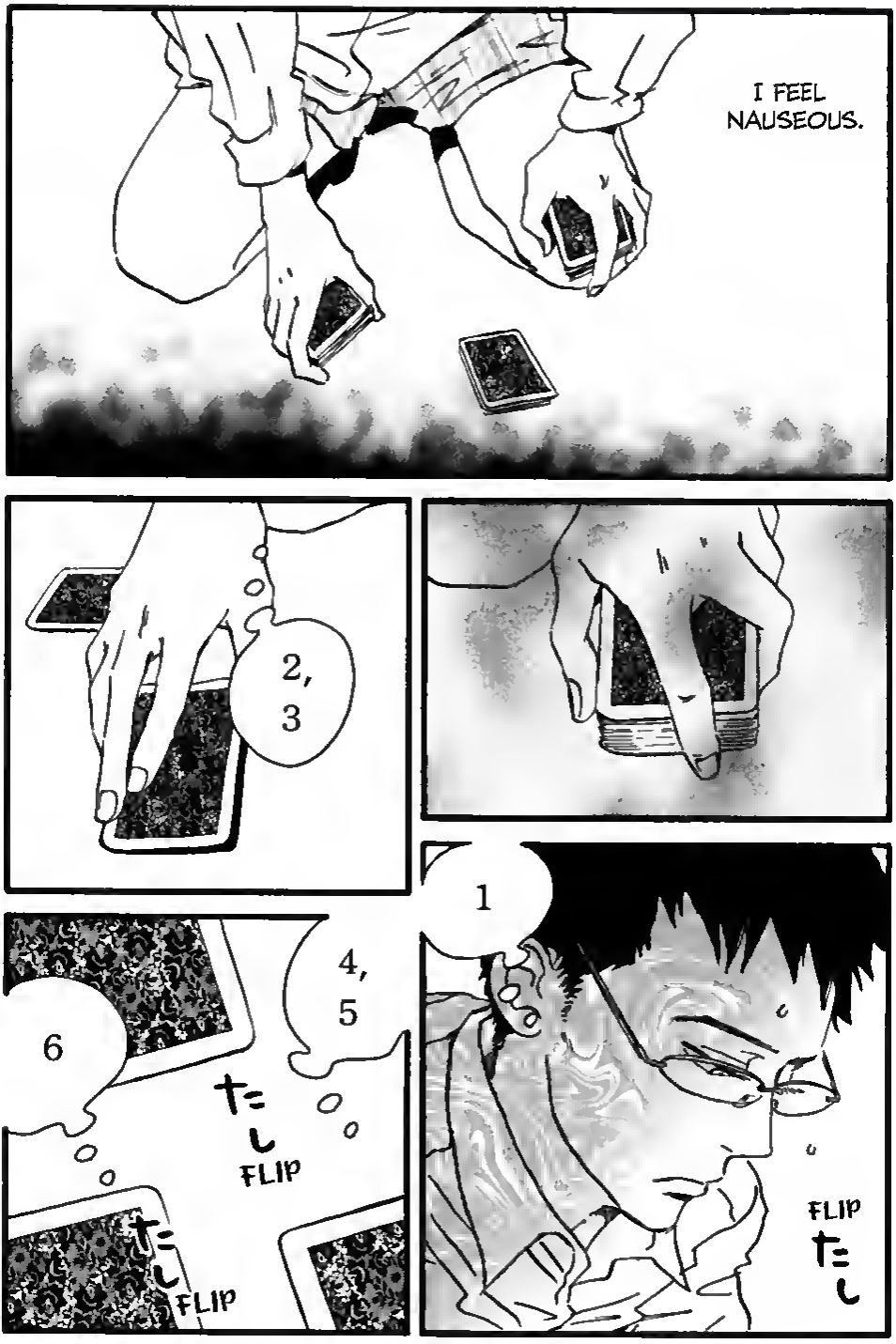
WHY DO ALL THE THINGS THAT I DON'T WANT TO REMEMBER ...
...KEEP PILING UP IN MY MIND?
Huh?
It's too bad.
Your teaching methods were easy to understand
But, you'll be fired for doing this

I don't care.
WHETHER THEY WERE MALE OR FEMALE, SIMILAR THINGS ENDED UP HAPPENING.
SO I SWITCHED TO GOING TO CRAM SCHOOL INSTEAD.
I've always wanted...
...to do this with you.
IT WAS THE SAME WITH ALL MY HOME TUTORS.
Like this, all the irrelevant memories get hauled into my mind.

SELF
24
RICE
SM
MED
LG
Hokka Hokka
WHIRR
It's a bad habit of mine...
DING
DONG
SHIMA
LUNCH
NEW
Welcome!
STARE
...
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
SLIDE
FWIP
One potato salad comes to $2.75.

HAVE THE OLD LADIES THERE...
ほっか
STEAMY
...GONE SENILE?


BURP
I HATE LEAVING LEFTOVERS.
カラン CLATTER
GIVE ME A BREAK.
TAP トン
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
I'd better stay away from that place for a while...
CLINK カチャ
CLINK カチャ

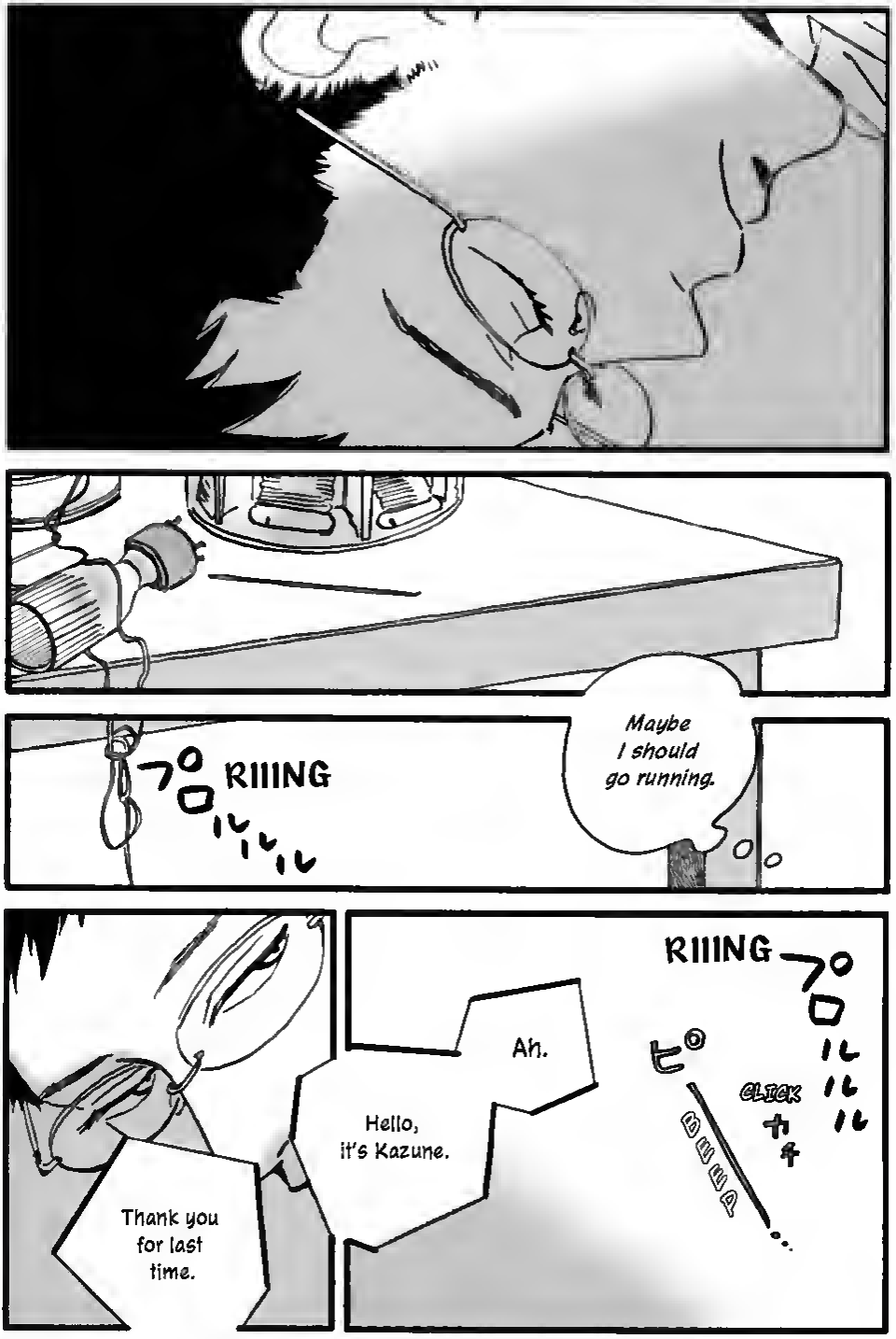

I FEEL NAUSEOUS.
2, 3
1
FLIP
たし
4, 5
6
FLIP
たし
FLIP
たし

I WANT TO HURRY UP AND LEARN A NEW MAGIC TRICK.
9, 10
8
7
WHERE DID I PUT THE STOMACH MEDICINE?
...I'LL HAVE NOTHING TO DO.
IF I DON'T...

YOU OLD GEEZER!
HURRY UP AND COME BACK.

I'M SLEEPY...
THUD
MY STOMACH FEELS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO BURST.

I FEEL AWFUL...
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT...
...I FEEL SO TIRED.


RIIING
Maybe I should go running.
RIIING
CLICK
Ah.
Hello, it's Kazune.
Thank you for last time.

By the way, I assume Konno must have told you about it already...
I'll be counting on you for the gathering at the Hibari Children's Center the day after tomorrow at 9:30 in the morning.
What?
BEEP
RIIING
CLICK
Konno?
I just got a call from your wife.
Right, right.

They're holding a charity bazaar at Kazune's workplace.
They need male helpers, so I said that I'd invite you.
You never *invited* me.
I never heard anything about this.
Yeah, but...
You're free anyway, right?
I'll be back Sunday evening, so I'll help clean up.
I'm on a business trip in Kazawa now.
Seriously, I'm counting on you.
WUU
WUU
WUU
Oh, my boss is back.
Thanks a lot.
CLICK

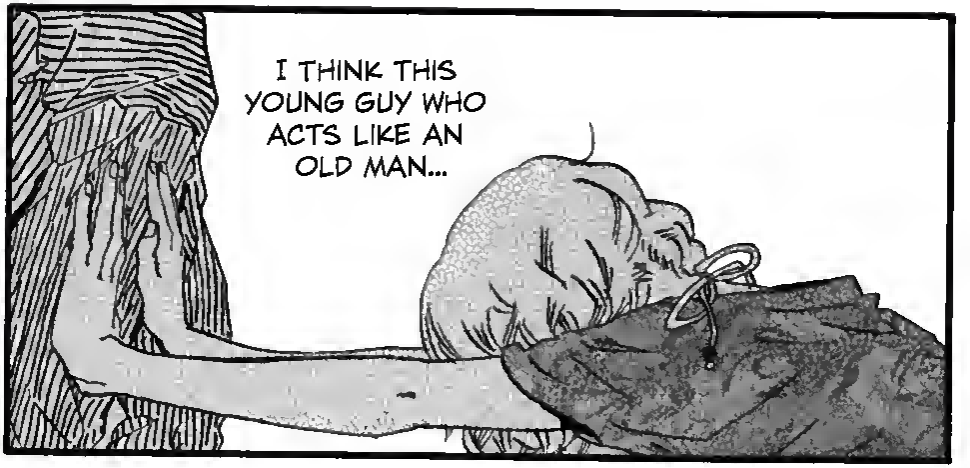
KNITTING WOOL
You want me to help out at a bazaar?
MENDED EMS
Easy reading
LET'S KNIT A SCRUBBING BRUSH!
... he must not have a lot of friends.
Yes.
An acquaintance of mine asked me to help.
I figure the more helpers there are, the better.
If he's asking me then...

ERK
ギク
Sure, I don't mind.
Just look at that face...
はぁ
PHEW
Sorry for asking such a big favor of you.
Then, I'll see you tomorrow.
OH, NO!
PLEASE DON'T TICKLE MY MOTHER HEN INSTINCTS!
Let's meet at the station at 9.

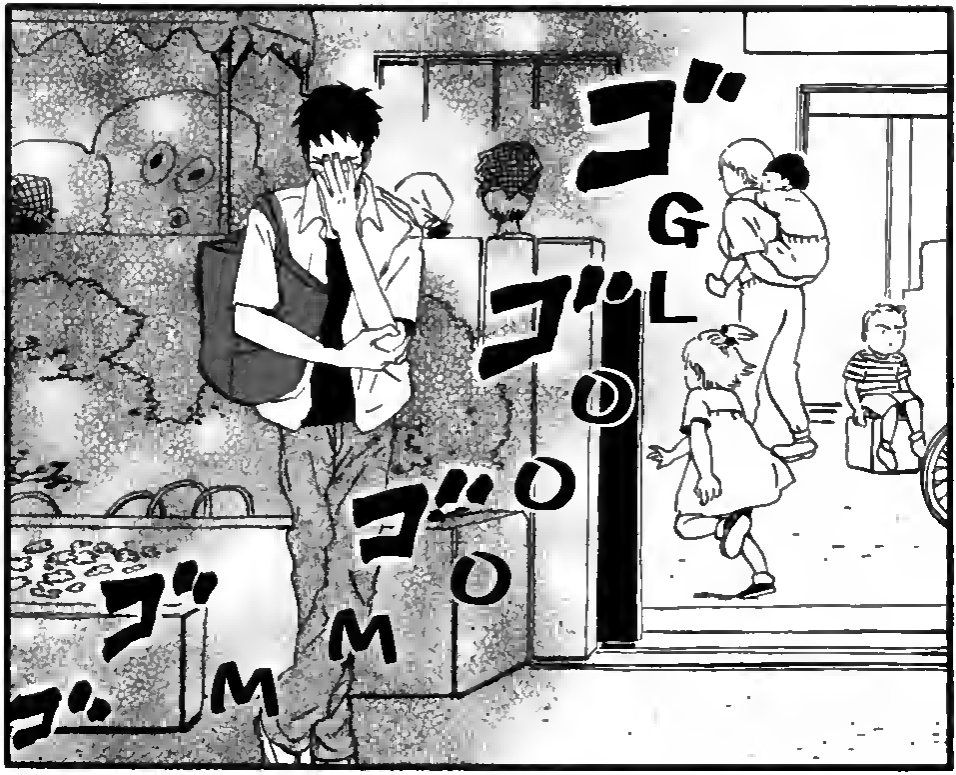
I couldn't figure out the loom on my own.
Ah, that reminds me.
TH-
THUMP
ド
キ

Huh?
ARE THESE TEARS OF FRUSTRATION?

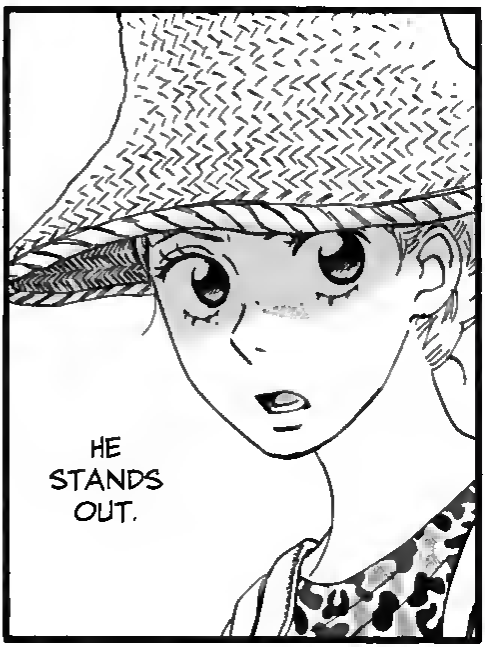
There's no real reason behind this.
Is it because of old age?
I wonder why I'm crying.
How would I know?!
Anyway...
Go home!
I see...
You shouldn't make that face so carelessly!
You're way too defenseless!



...MIGHT ACTUALLY BE EMOTIONALLY UNSTABLE.

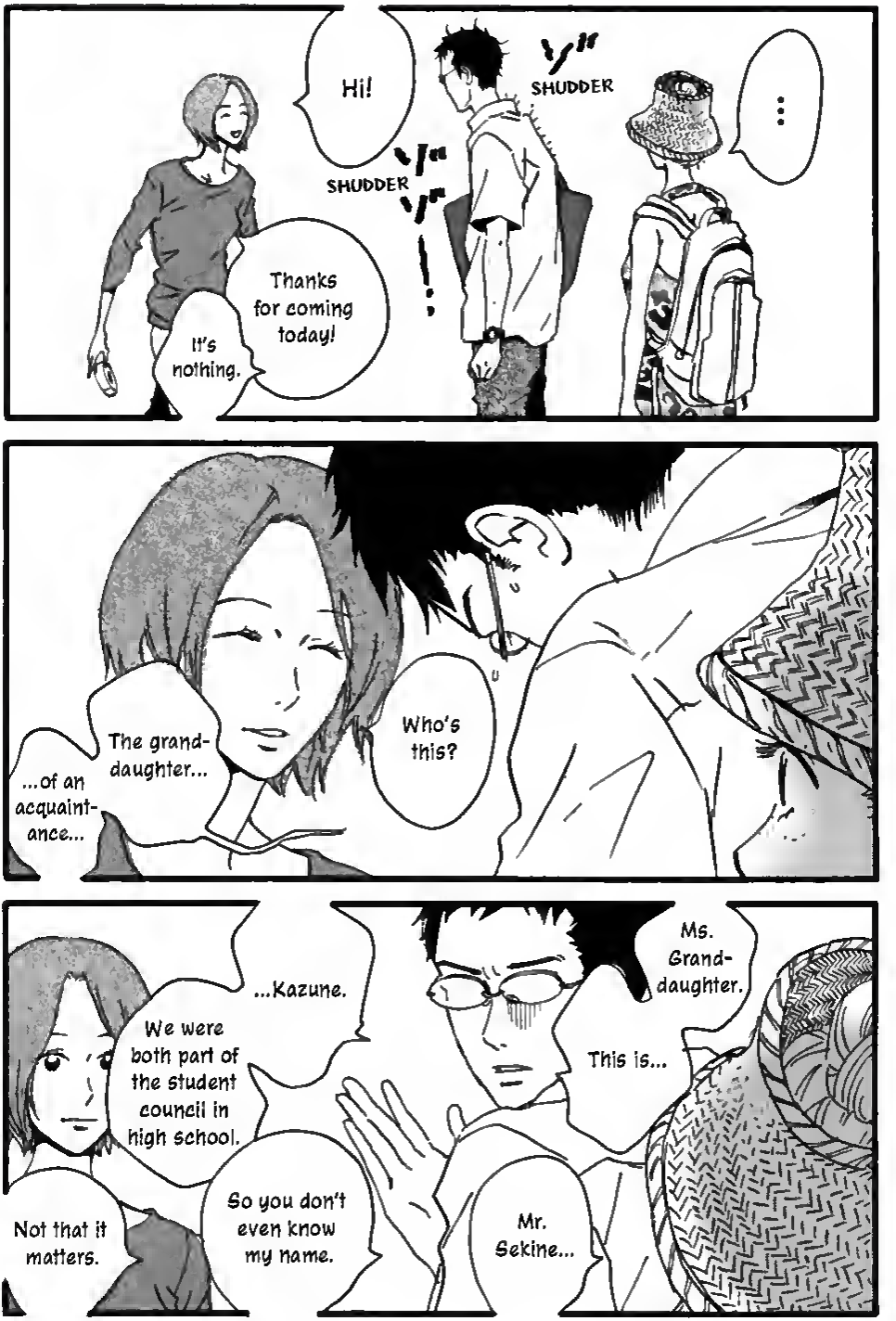

ゴ
G
ゴ
L
ゴ
ゴ
M
M

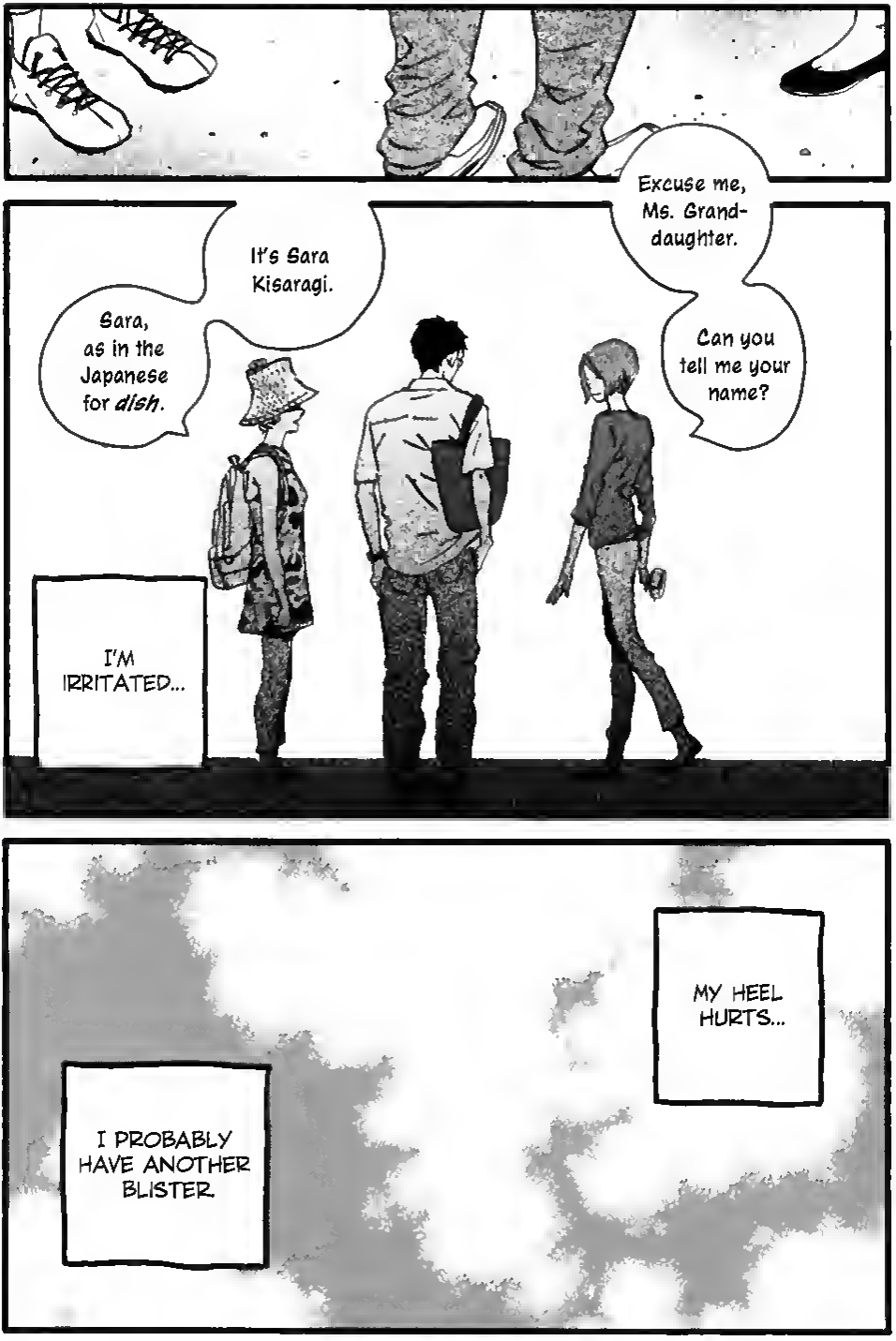
キャ
KYAA
BEEP
BEEP
...
- Or something?
Is he a mannequin on a stand? -


HE STANDS OUT.

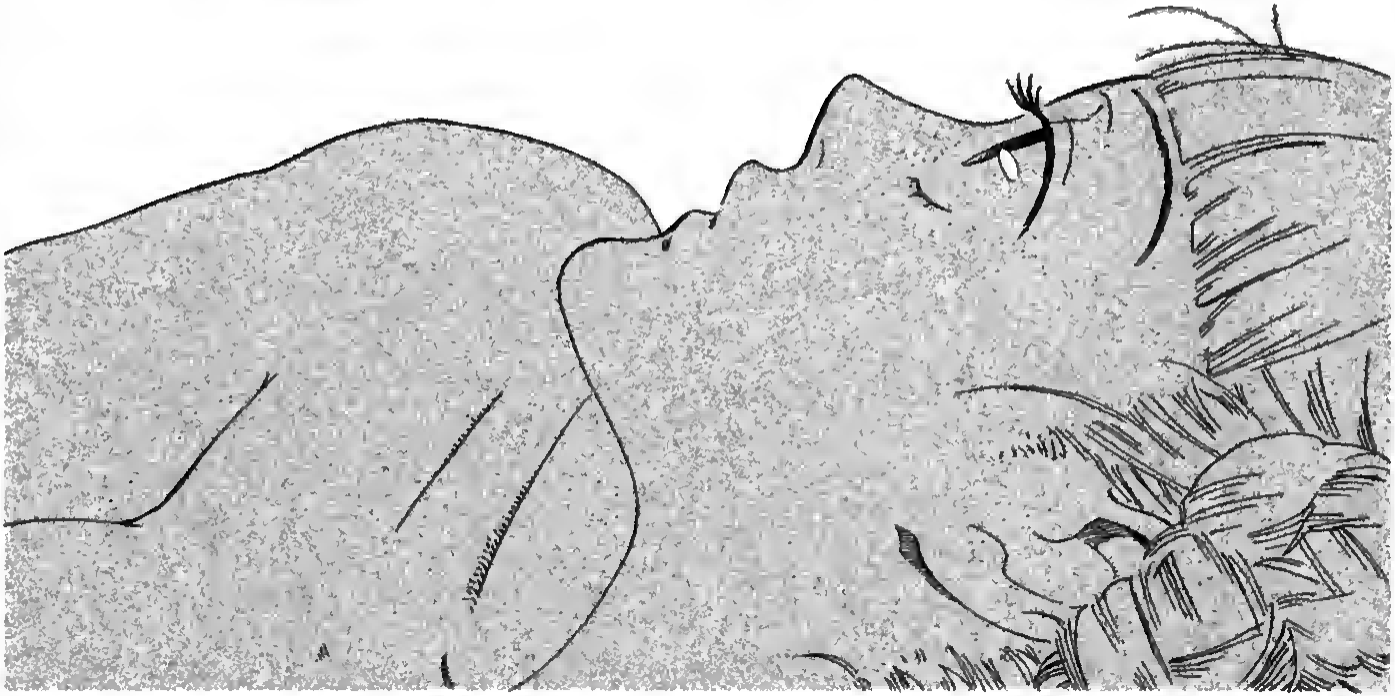
IT'S REALLY FUNNY.
WAVE
WAVE
Hey, I'm here!
HE'S STANDING IN SUCH AN IDYLLIC SETTING.
HUH?
His complexion ...
What's...
...with that hat?

Hey!
Sekine!
NOCHI
BAAR
A hole?
...doesn't look good.
Yes.
I decided to put my hair up.
Doesn't it look like a loom?
ピシ
FREEZE
ギギギ
ギギギ


Hi!
SHUDDER
SHUDDER
...
Thanks for coming today!
It's nothing.
Who's this?
The granddaughter...
...of an acquaintance...
Ms. Granddaughter.
This is...
Mr. Sekine...
...Kazune.
We were both part of the student council in high school.
So you don't even know my name.
Not that it matters.


Excuse me, Ms. Granddaughter.
Can you tell me your name?
It's Sara Kisaragi.
Sara, as in the Japanese for *dish*.
I'M IRRITATED...
MY HEEL HURTS...
I PROBABLY HAVE ANOTHER BLISTER.

FORESHOCK



ldren's Center Fair
PICTURE STORYTELL
I haven't viewed scenes like this...
BAKED BEANS
Hot Dogs
...for a very long time.

EXCEPT FOR SOMEONE HERE.
It's so peaceful.
Ms. Grand-daughter ...
What's with that stance?
Is he planning to use that rubber band gun to murder someone?
RUBBER BAND GUN
What's that?
Shh!
WHISPER
Don't look it in the eyes!
WHISPER

We've had no customers since opening up, and the children pass by without noticing us.
The shooting game doesn't seem to be popular.
Score!
CARDS
It's Kisaragi.
Ms. Kisaragi...
Yes?
What is it?
Here...
They're all flocking...
...to the monster cards booth.
You're starting to look like a politician.
Huh?

SCRATCH
Forehead ...
SCRATCH
.....
If you keep making that expression...
...there'll be permanent deep wrinkles on your forehead.
...when you become an old man...
I see...
ギク
ERK
So her name's... Kazune?
...you two must have been going out for a long time.
No...
Since you've known her from your high school days...

RUB
RUB
They got married last year.
Fore-head...
She dated...
...one of my former classmates.
?
Do you have any Band-Aids?
...?
Um...

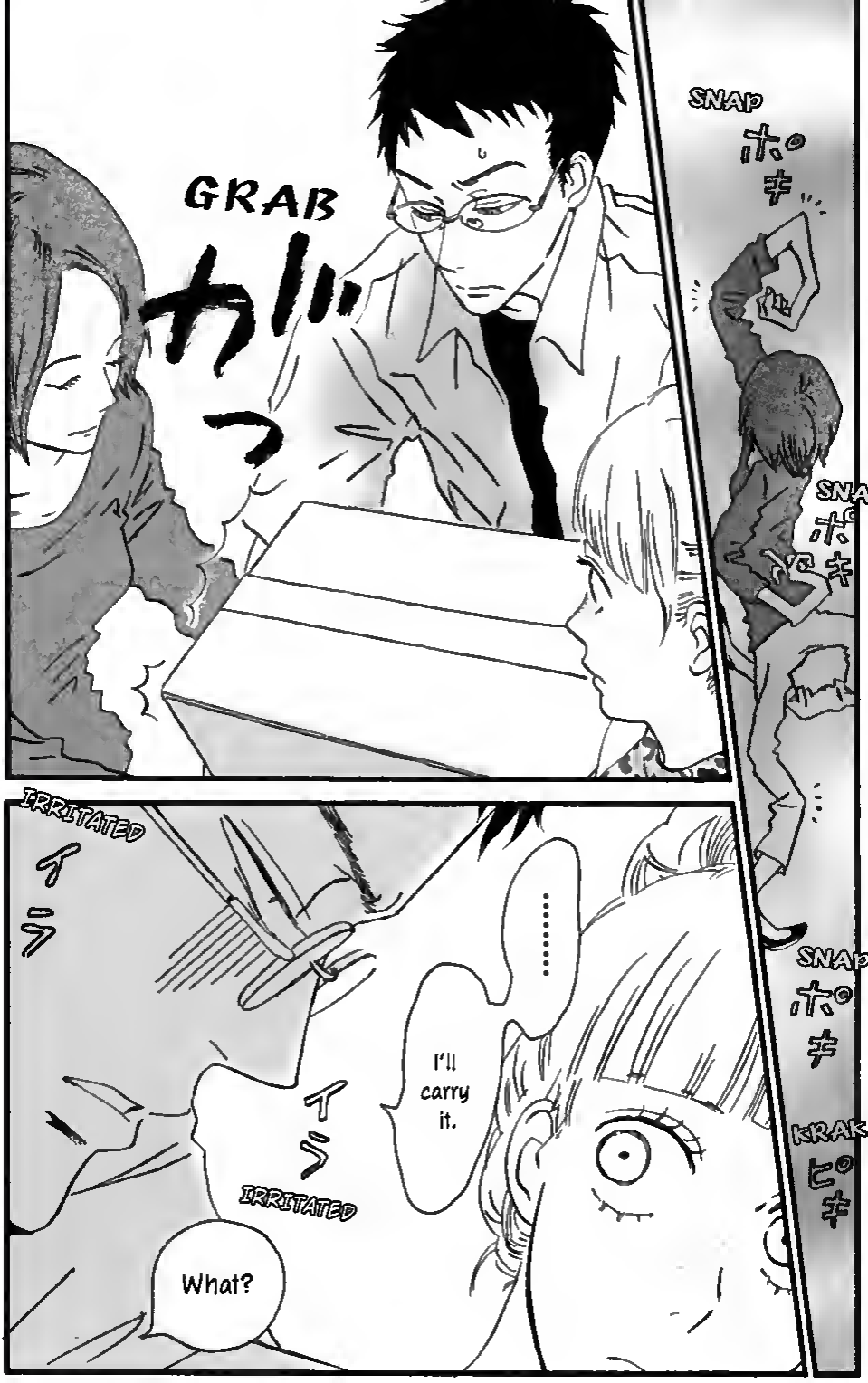
Sorry.
No problem.
How are things going?
So he makes that expression when he feels uncomfortable.
PFT
The spot that was almost healed...
...got reopened.
Ahh...

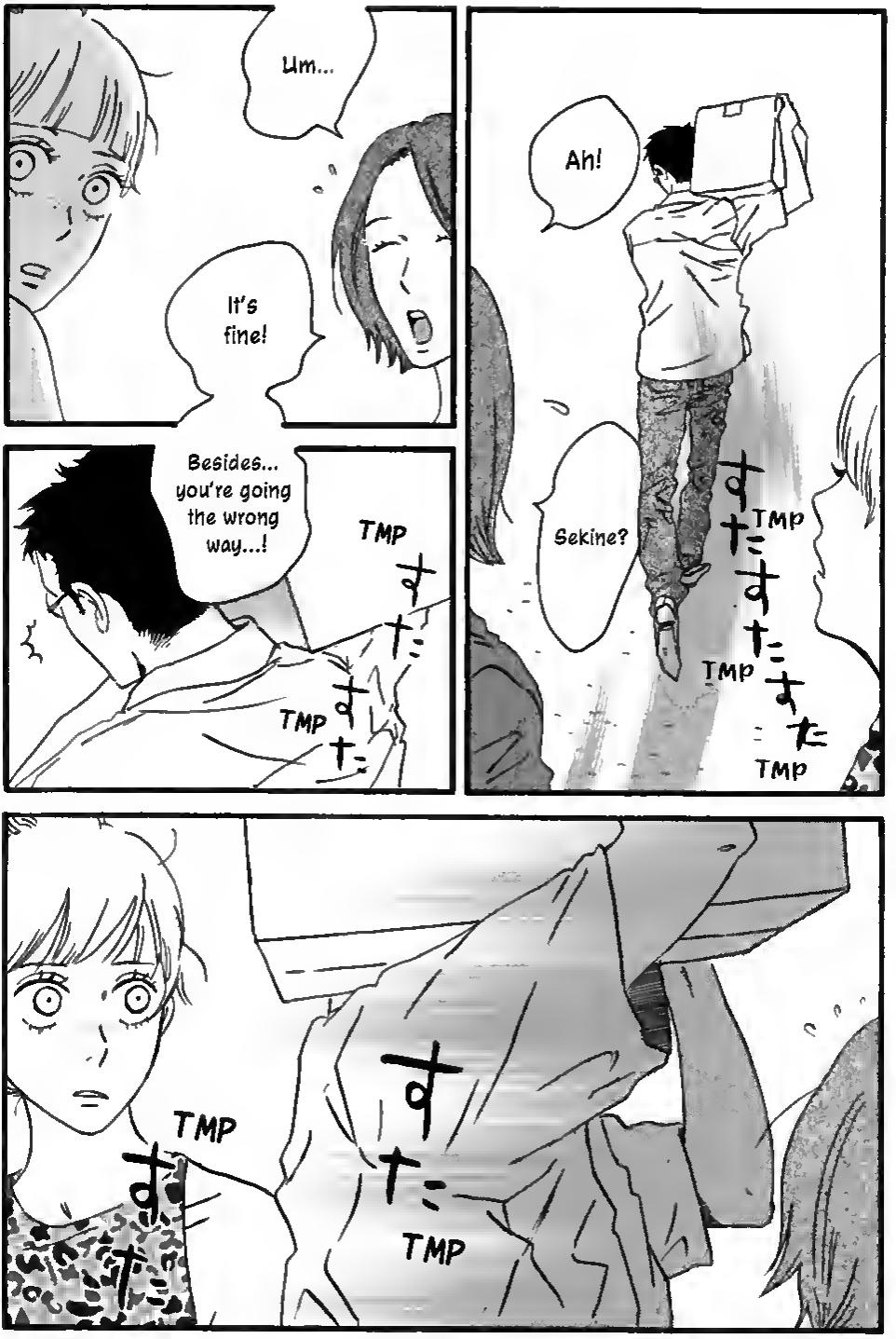
I'm glad the weather's clear today.
Did you get any customers?
It'll get busier in the afternoon, so keep it up.
OK.
If you're interested, take a look when we change shifts.
Miniature books?
You make miniature books the size of matchboxes.
Oh.
Oh, and there's also this.
There's a workshop in the audio-visual room.
The World of Miniature Picture Books
Miniature Book Workshop

Why?
They're both human, but why are they so different?
SHUDDER
UGH...

ON TOP OF BEING TOO PALE...
...SHE'S TOO SKINNY.
Mrs. Kazune!
The book-making materials are here!
OK.
Could I be guilty of...
...discrimination?
AND HER VEINS...
...ARE POPPING OUT AGAIN TODAY.

Heave!
Ho!
SNAP
SNAP
ペキッ
SNAP
GAPE


GRAB
カバッ
SNAP
ポキ
SNAP
ポキ
SNAP
ポキ
KRAK
ピキ
IRRITATED
イラ
IRRITATED
イラ
What?
I'll carry it.
……

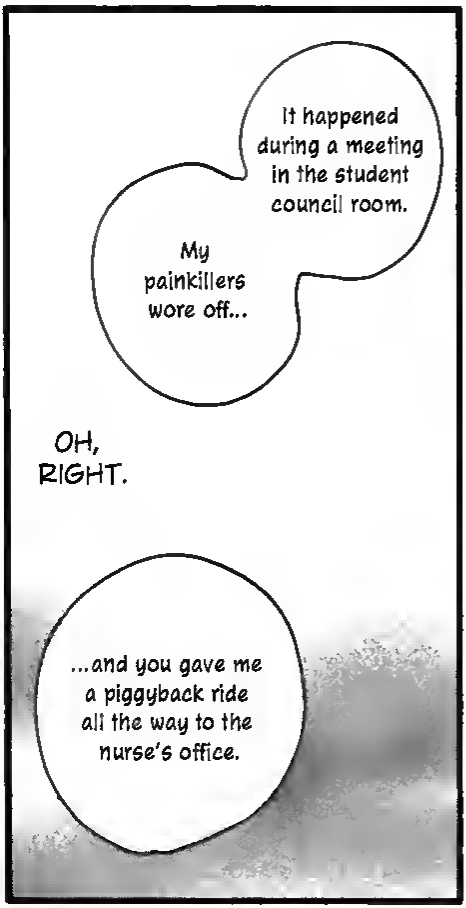

Um...
It's fine!
Ah!
Sekine?
すたすたすた
TMP
Besides... you're going the wrong way...!
TMP
すたすた
TMP
すたすた

WAVE
ひら
WAVE
ひら
That's OK.
Um...
Sorry for the trouble.
Sara!
We'll be right back!
BLUSH
あせあせ
.....

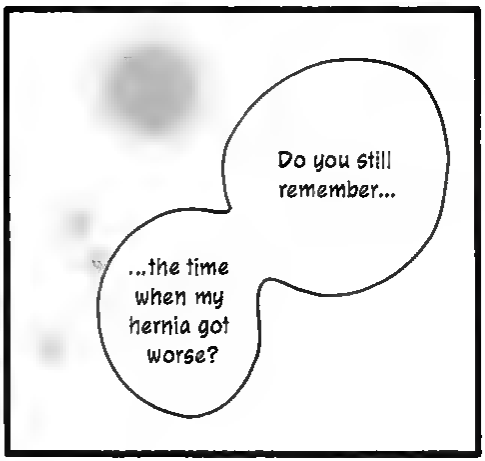
umm~~~~~
EVEN AN ORDINARY PERSON LIKE ME COULD SENSE SOMETHING.
She dated...
...one of my former classmates.

MR. SEKINE...
OH MY GOD, MR. SEKINE IS...
...
MR. SEKINE IS...
Calm down.
I CAUGHT ON TO ALL THE SMALL SIGNALS.
Are there any more?
That's all.
THUD

Thanks.
Then I'll be heading back.
OK.


It happened during a meeting in the student council room.
My painkillers wore off...
OH, RIGHT.
...and you gave me a piggyback ride all the way to the nurse's office.

Heh heh.
I'm feeling a little embarrassed.
Why?


Do you still remember...
...the time when my hernia got worse?

But, while you were carrying me...
...I was in so much pain and everyone was staring at us.
So I started bawling.
WHEN I CARRIED HER ON MY BACK...
SOMETHING LIKE THAT DID HAPPEN.
...I WASN'T CARRYING ANYONE AT ALL.
...IT FELT LIKE...
MY BACK...
...WAS FROZEN STIFF.
SHE WAS THAT RIDICU-LOUSLY LIGHT.

HER SNIFFLING CLOSE TO MY EAR...
...MADE MY HAIR STAND ON END.
SNIFF SNIFF

Sekine
SLAM
NURSE'S OF
ガラ
RATTLE
Are you two going out?
No way.
Just now...
Why did you give Kazune a piggyback ride?
Then, it's true!
Huh?
No way.
So will you give us a ride if we ask?
I was asked to.
Then why carry her?

KYAA
I'm next!
I'm next!
Hey, that's not fair!
I heard that he'll carry us for ten meters if we ask him.

Kazune's special isn't she?

FOR SOME REASON, PIGGYBACK RIDES WERE THE CRAZE BACK THEN.

Um...
Like we said ...
We don't just want...
... you to give us piggyback rides

I don't understand ...
... what you're saying

We like you...
...Sekine.
Want to...
...try going out with us?
We can put a time limit on it if you want.
It's OK even if you don't come to like us.
So tell me...
What do you mean by us?
Since there's a chance that either one of us will be dumped...
...it doesn't matter who goes first.
So...
Right?
Yeah.

.....
Give us some of your time.
SPARKLE
Fine.
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
Please, Sekine!
So please!
SPARKLE
The peace sign?
Two...
Two hundred dollars?
No!
As of now, since I have to go to the doctor's later, I'll go out with you for twenty minutes.
For this much.

Can we even finish...
...in twenty minutes?
Then, let's go all out.
Yeah.
B-But even if it's only for a short while, we can be his girlfriends!
Let's make it count!
You're right.
He said twenty minutes...
What should we do?

About that piggyback ride...
Why?
What was that all about?
No, idea...
For some reason, I got asked to do it one after another.
Oh.
Come to think of it, there was a Sekine fan club.
You were the only boy in the student council after all.
Our advisor made you do it, right?
...after you gave me that piggyback ride, I caught you giving a bunch of different girls piggyback rides.
The only thing I found strange was...

But, after meeting Sara today...
...I felt...
Konno was jealous of you in those days.
...somewhat relieved.
HUH?
Right?
STAB
You two seem like a good match.

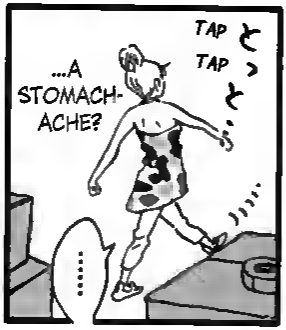
5PTS
Hey, hey.
Gimme another set of rubber bands.
Do you have a ticket?
BLAM!
OK, that's ten cents' worth.
This?
Ms. Kisaragi.
OF ALL THINGS...
...IT HAD TO BE WITH YOUR FRIEND'S WIFE.
Just like in a soap opera.

I'm going to the drugstore for a bit.
カツ TMP
カツ TMP
カツ TMP
WHOA...
WHY IS HE STRUTTING LIKE A MODEL ALL OF A SUDDEN?!
Wh-
What's wrong?
This hardly ever happens.

It seems I have a weak stomach.

...I have some with me.
If you don't mind over-the-counter drugs...
YOU HAVE...
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP

IN OTHER WORDS...


...A STOMACH-ACHE?
TAP
TAP

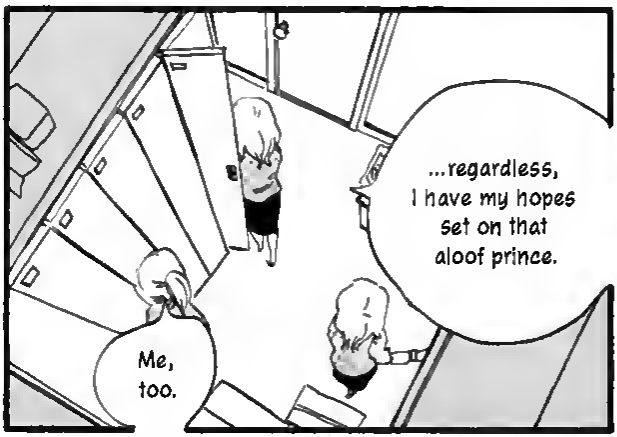
……
UGH..
DROOL
……
GULP
Why...
...are you crying again?
I've replenished the fluids in my body, that's why.
Are you stupid?

No matter how insignificant, there must be a reason.
You need to confront the reason behind those tears.
Tears threaten other people.
If you're going to cry, do it after taking that into account.
.....
If you can't, then don't expose it in front of other people.
Or at least, not in front of me.
Those around you will worry about it more than you would yourself.

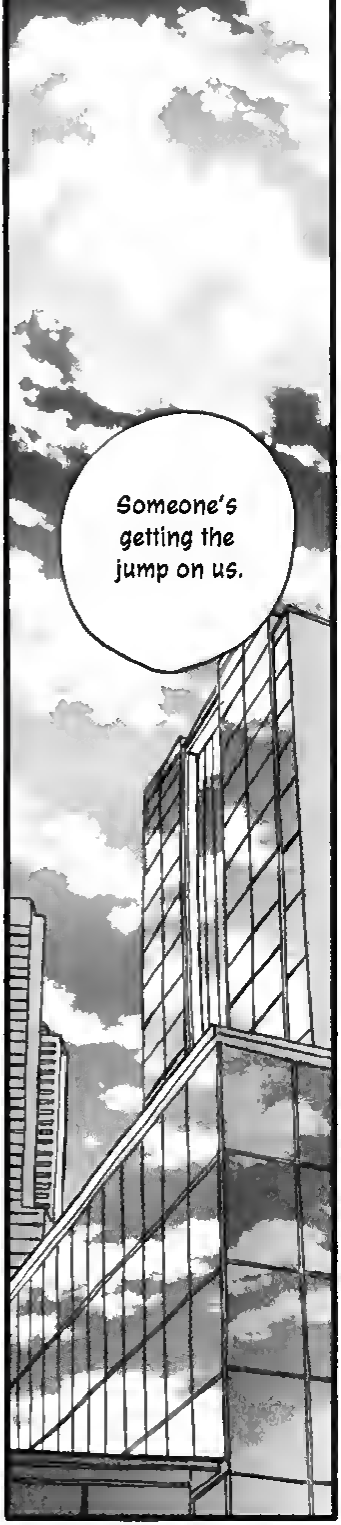
Cry-baby!

MAYBE I SHOULD MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR A CHECKUP.

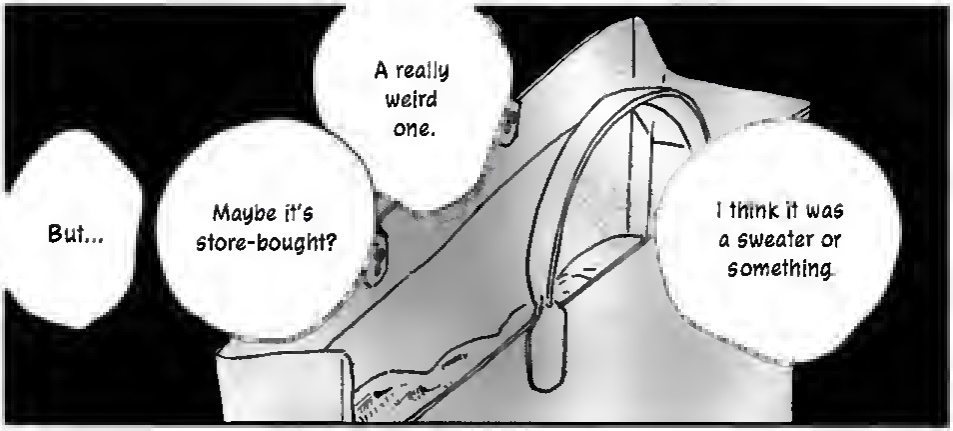
What?
What are you talking about?
Of course I still can't leave him alone...


...regardless, I have my hopes set on that aloof prince.
Me, too.

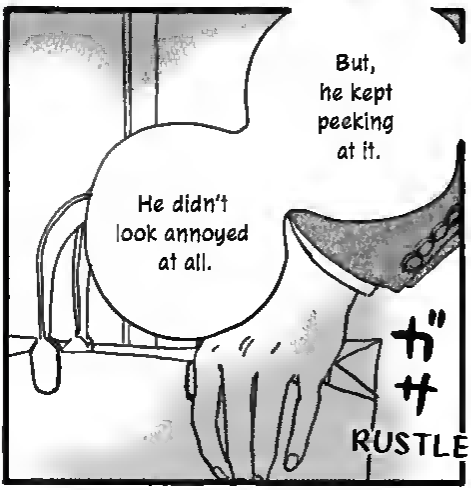
What are you guys going on about?
Ohh... Well...

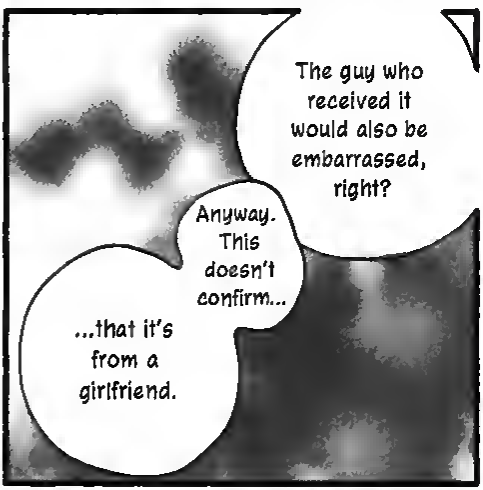

Someone's getting the jump on us.

Oh, my.
It's someone in the company!
Huh?
No way! Are you serious?!
Your source?
It seems as if Sekine's got a girlfriend.
...beside his desk.
There was one of our company's paper bags...
Something hand-knit?!
I accidentally peeked inside a little while ago.
Accidentally? Right...
That's when I saw...


A really weird one.
But...
Maybe it's store-bought?
I think it was a sweater or something.

Wasn't the girl embarrassed to give something like that as a present?
It has his name on it?
No way!
Even just putting in initials creeps guys out nowadays.


But, he kept peeking at it.
He didn't look annoyed at all.
RUSTLE


The guy who received it would also be embarrassed, right?
Anyway. This doesn't confirm...
...that it's from a girlfriend.

All that's left...
... is to knit this armhole, and I'll be done.

What have you done?!
...I'll be getting off earlier than I thought.
Should I drop by the tarot card shop I found on the net before going to class?
Anyway, it looks like...
Admitting it now doesn't help...
It was my fault.
For the time being, I'll see if I can stop the process.
Do you plan to go around and prostrate yourself to everyone?!
How will you explain having added an extra zero?!
The problem is the parts that we ordered separately from the maker.
The amount isn't the problem.
It's quite a large sum.
Today isn't convenient, so there's no time.
Was it an ordering mistake?
Got a moment, Sekine?

Well.
Let's do what we can.
We'll share the work.
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
What should we do?
The only thing we can do this time...
...is to try to place an order for a different lot from one of our close partners.
Ahh...
He's so cool
HMPH!
She hasn't learned a thing.
Phew!
Thank you very much!
Be careful next time.

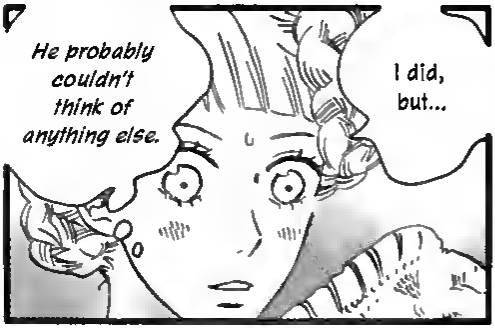
...WILL HAVE TO WAIT.
I GUESS THE TAROT CARD SHOP...
Kya!
Oh...
WHAM
I was in a hurry.
Oh, no...
I'm sorry, too.
RUSTLE
Sorry.

Good night.
Good night!
RUSTLE
Did you see?
It definitely looked hand-knit.
NATSUYA GINZA
He even used our company's bag.
It must be for camouflage.

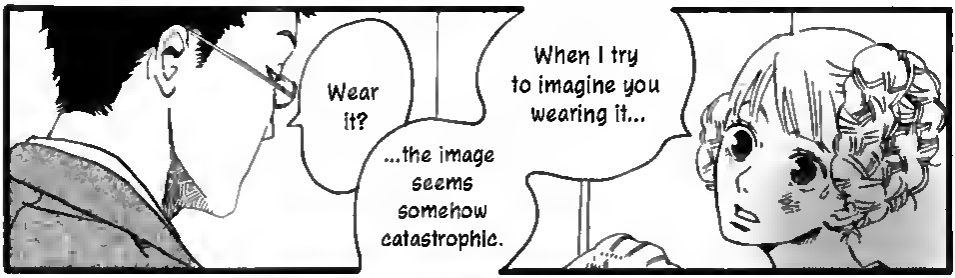
I'll take this.
Charge it to my card.
バタン
THUNK
RATTLE
RATTLE
ガタン
ガトン
制限高 3.8 m
SPEED LIMIT

Whoa, whoa!
Whoa!
Well, who would have guessed that in that 007 suitcase...
...are knitting yarn and a loom?
Not to mention ...
What's your problem?

You were the one who told me...
...to try putting in some letters.


He probably couldn't think of anything else.
I did, but...

SKINZ
You put this in yourself, right?
Why?

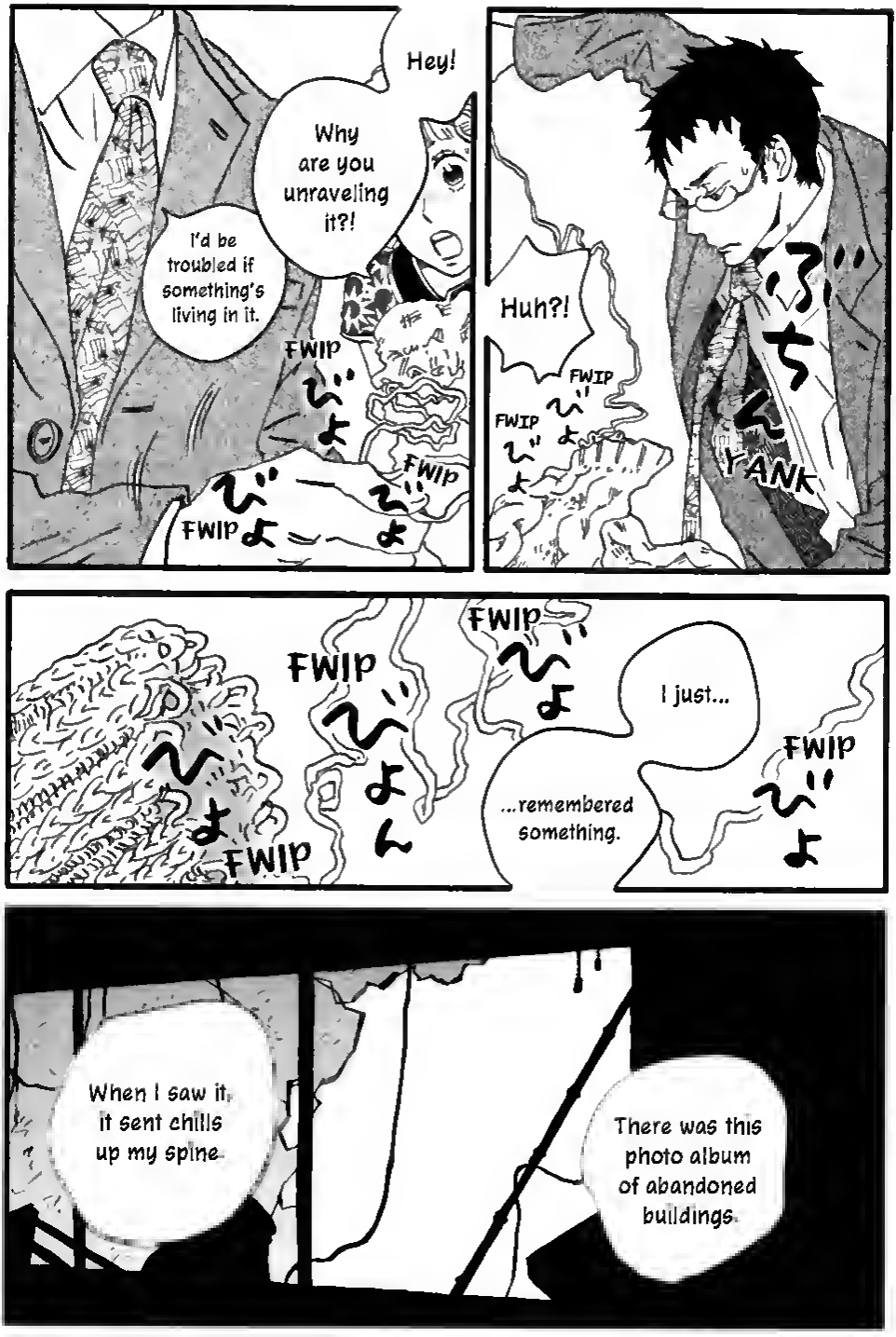

Wear it?
...the image seems somehow catastrophic.
When I try to imagine you wearing it...

.....
All that trouble?

But, you went through all that trouble to make this.
He has a point.
...such a stupid thing?
Who would wear...

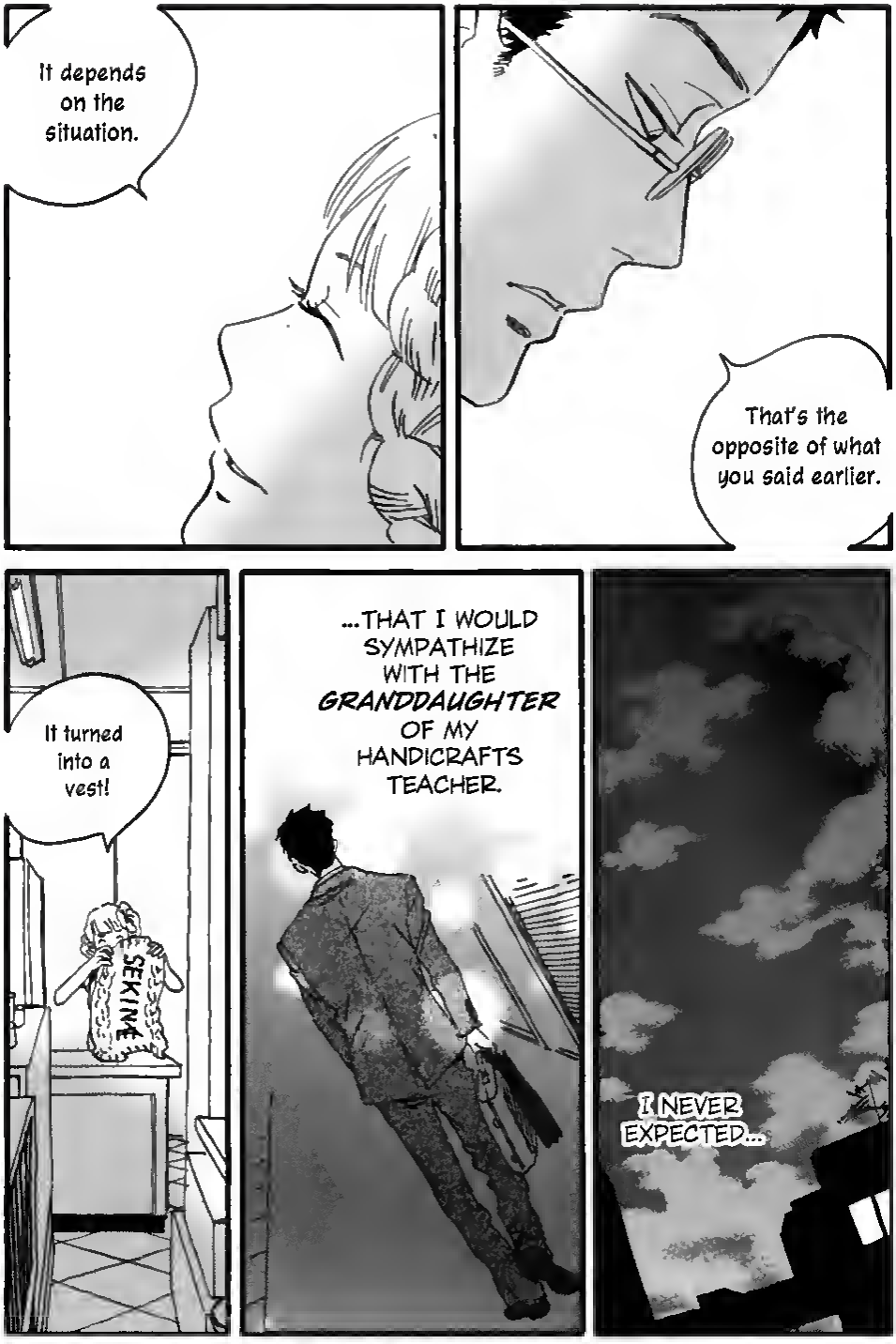
I NEVER PLANNED ON GOING THROUGH ANY TROUBLE...
...TO MAKE THIS STUPID AND WORTHLESS HANDMADE THING.
I JUST DID IT TO KILL TIME.
It's really well-made, but...
Only people named Sekine can wear this And even if you were, you still wouldn't
I don't think the word Sekine exists in other languages
If you planned on wearing it like one of those "I Love N.Y." type clothings, it could work.
But, this. Maybe you'd be able to wear it if it was in Japanese characters
Oh, well...
Congrats on completing it.
Right...
It's the process that's most enjoyable in making these kinds of things.

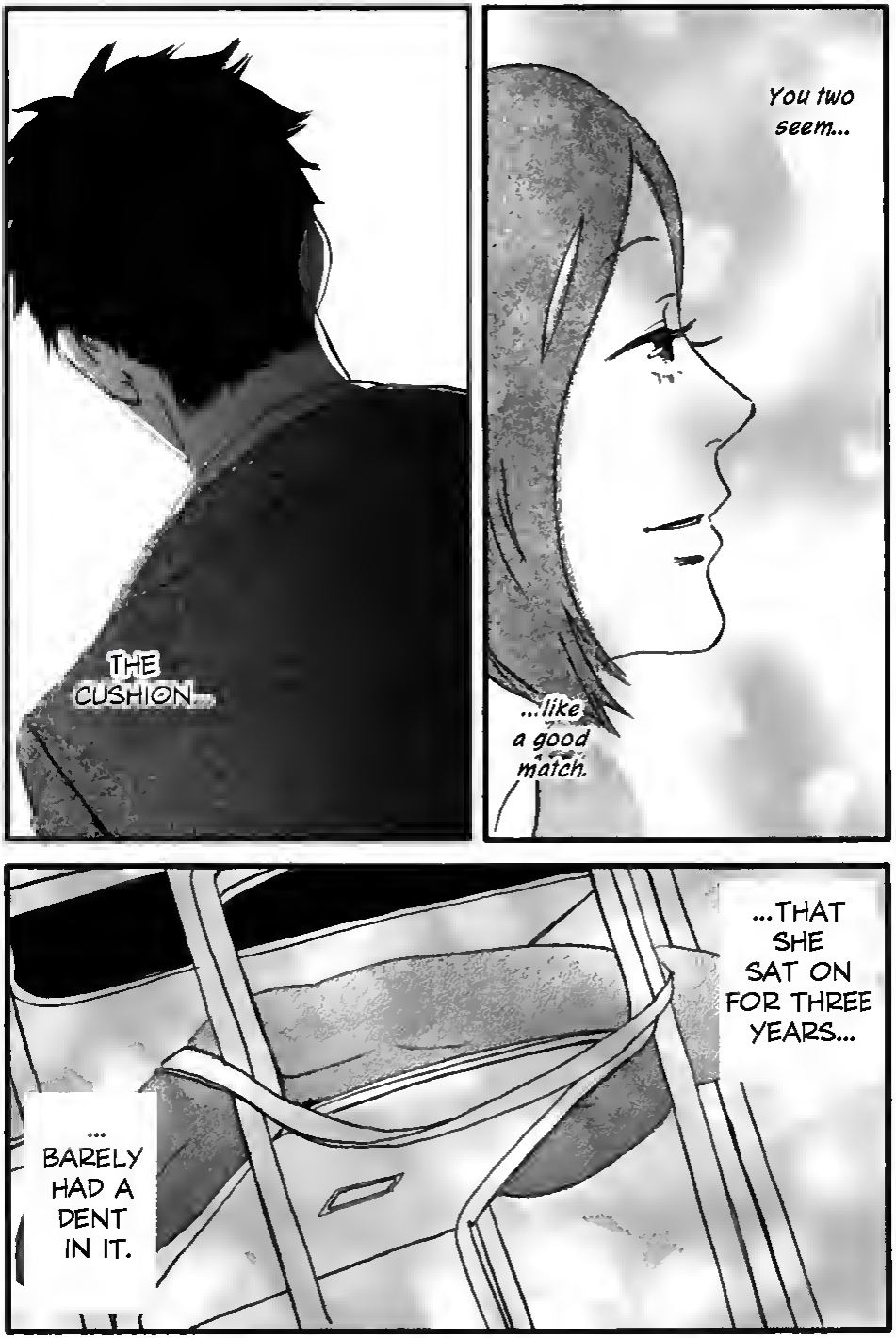
Be troubled...
If you were to use it...
...you'd probably be troubled from growing too attached to it.
I really love the idea of things like the *Tsukumogami*.
Tsuku-mogami?
The idea that gods dwell in the tools or other things that you've used...
...for many long months and years.
.....
GRAB
ヒッ!


Hey!
Why are you unraveling it?!
I'd be troubled if something's living in it.
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
Huh?!
FWIP
FWIP
YANK
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
I just...
...remembered something.
When I saw it, it sent chills up my spine.
There was this photo album of abandoned buildings.

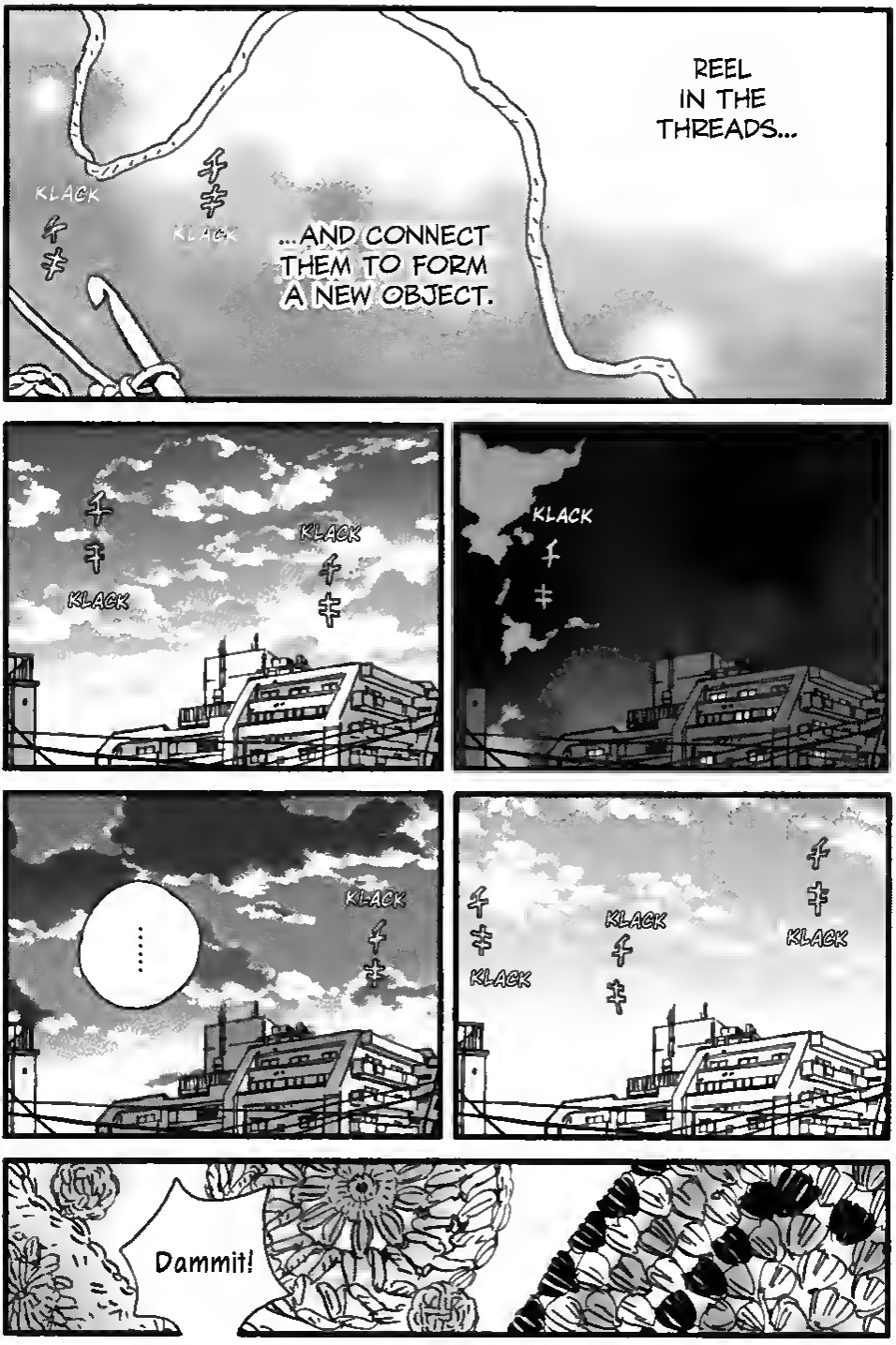
CUPS WITH THEIR CONTENTS ONLY PARTIALLY DRUNK.
CUSHIONS WITH DENTS.
Feelings remain in objects...
...and get stuck in them, only to gather dust.
LAUNDRY LEFT FOR-GOTTEN.
びよん
FWIP
FWIP
びよん
FWIP びよん
Is it because you felt like it was abandoned?
Huh?
I kind of get it.
FWIP びよん
DESKS WITH NO ONE TO SIT IN THEM.

...when I think that I want everything cremated with me...
...when I die.
There are times...
It's like I can't stand...
...when things are left behind or get stuck.
WIND
WIND


It depends on the situation.
That's the opposite of what you said earlier.
It turned into a vest!
SEKINE
...THAT I WOULD SYMPATHIZE WITH THE GRANDDAUGHTER OF MY HANDICRAFTS TEACHER.
I NEVER EXPECTED...

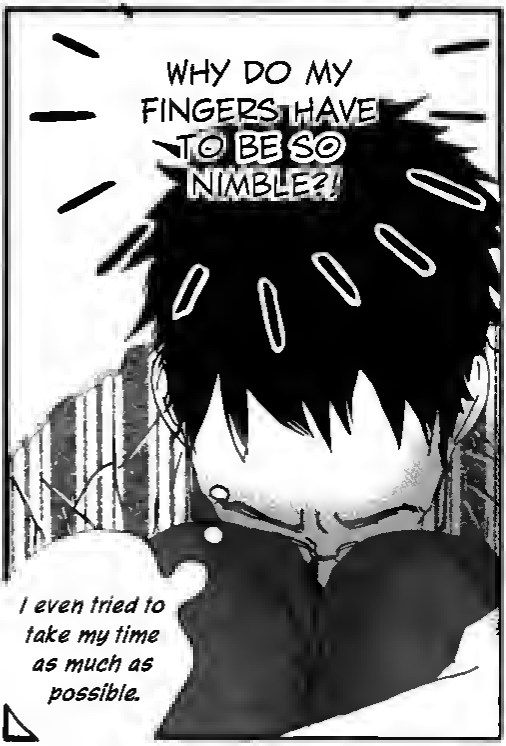

THE CUSHION...
You two seem...
...like a good match.
...THAT SHE SAT ON FOR THREE YEARS...
...BARELY HAD A DENT IN IT.

IT PROBABLY MEANS SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
TO BECOME SO ATTACHED TO SOMETHING THAT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
ON THE OTHER HAND...
...KONNO'S CUSHION QUICKLY BECAME WORN OUT AND FLAT.
I CAN'T WAIT TO COUNT THE STITCHES.
WHATEVER...
I felt...
...somewhat relieved.


KLACK
KLACK
...AND CONNECT THEM TO FORM A NEW OBJECT.
REEL IN THE THREADS...
KLACK
KLACK
KLACK
KLACK
KLACK
KLACK
KLACK
KLACK
KLACK
Dammit!

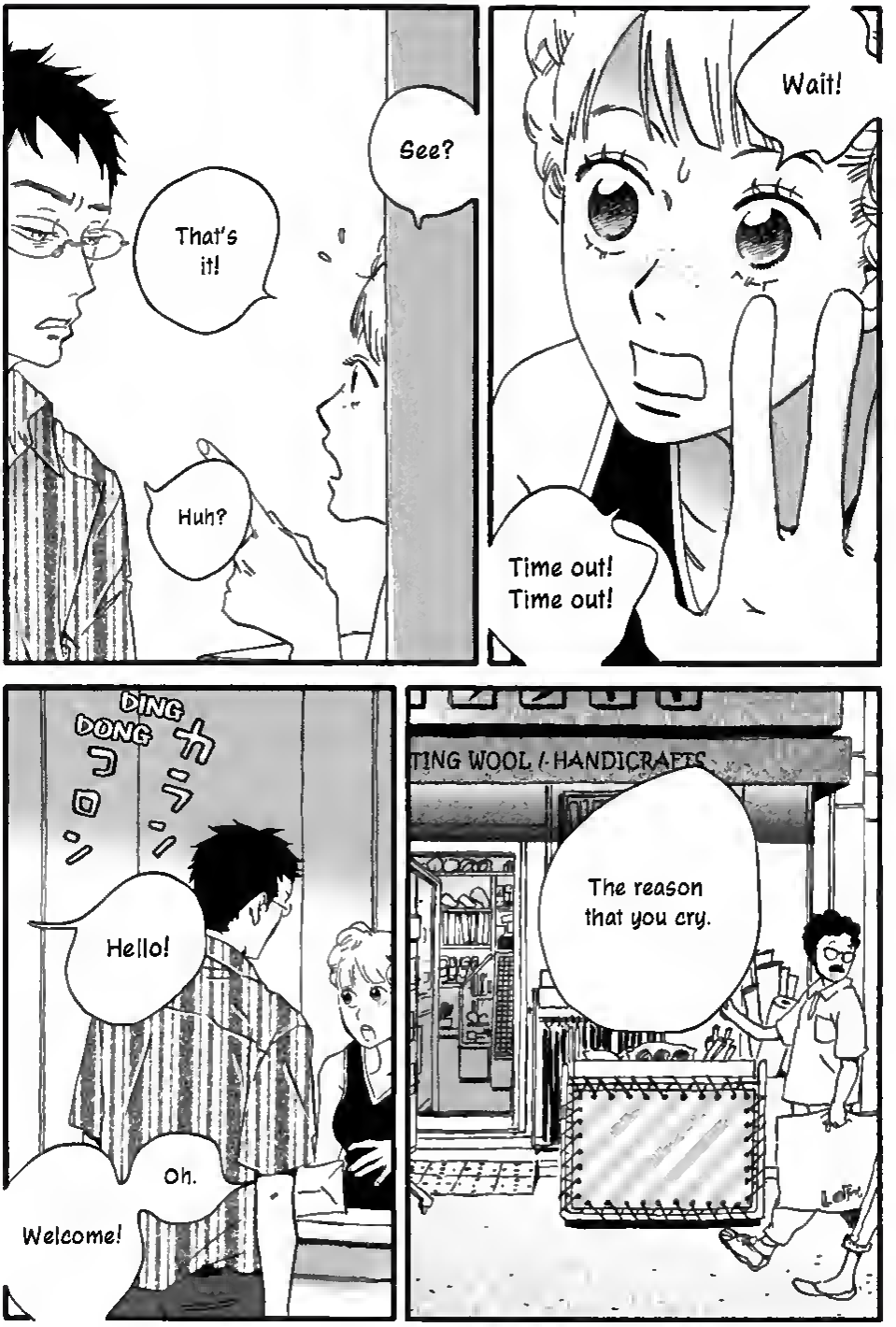
AND IT'S BARELY SATURDAY NIGHT!
It went and knitted...
...everything in the book!

Whoa...
KNITTING W
Ah.
I really will sell these, you know.


WHY DO MY FINGERS HAVE TO BE SO NIMBLE?!
I even tried to take my time as much as possible.

Isn't there something you want to save up for and buy?
No.
Or some place you want to go?
Not in particular.
You can earn some extra money?
Um...
What's the point in selling them?
For what?
There's nothing you want to do either?
Not really.
What? You're no fun.

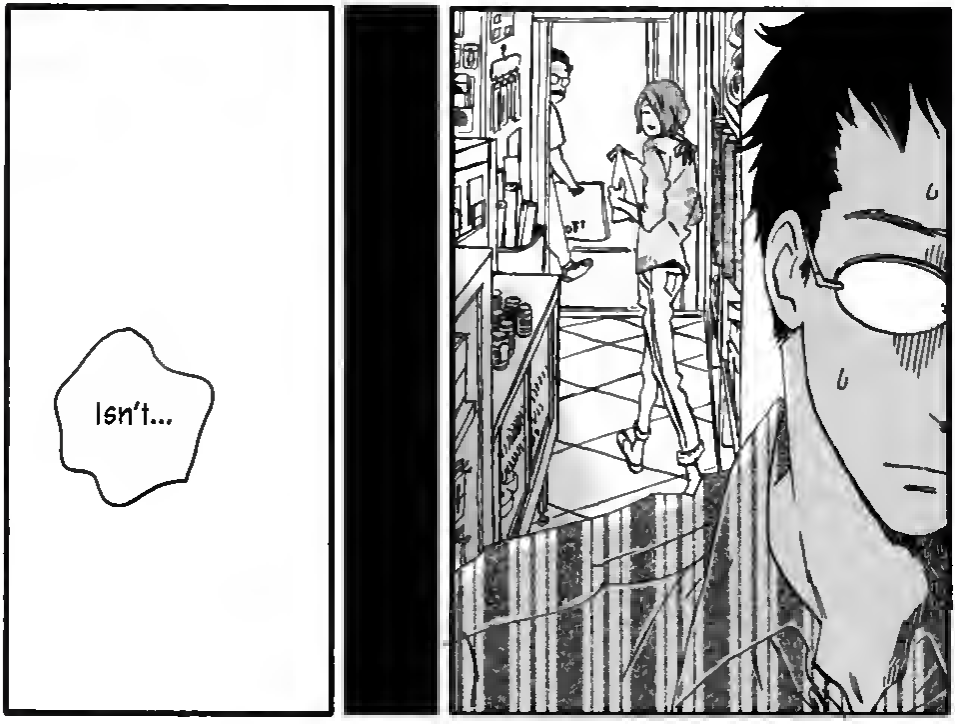
Ah.
I guess I hit the bull's-eye.
There's no reason ...
...for you to go that far.
Wah!


See?
That's it!
Huh?
Wait!
Time out! Time out!
DING DONG
カラーン
コロン
Hello!
Oh.
Welcome!
TING WOOL / HANDICRAFTS
The reason that you cry.

RATTLE
ガタ
Mrs. Kazune!
Hi, Sara!
We were nearby...
...so I decided to stop by for a bit.
ガー
WHIRR
Huh?
Sekine... you're here, too.
FWIP

Oh!
You mentioned this before.
So this was what started your romance, huh.
Huh?
Handicrafts Class
Every Sat & Sun
Class Fee (Includes materials) ¥2 per lesson
Wow!
What a coincidence.
Hello...
Huh?
Um...
...?
I see you're enjoying each other's company, while tending to the store today as well.

Please give me one meter of this fabric.
.....
Aww, you two make such a cute pair.
?
Thank you.


Isn't...

Things can't go on this way.
She asked me about it at the bazaar.
And?!
Isn't she getting the wrong idea about us?
What made her think...
...that I was your girlfriend?
You didn't deny it either, did you?
I don't remember giving a positive answer.

But, well.
It's not like it's true.
That's not the problem here.
If you keep on ignoring it...
...I'll become more and more meddlesome.

I told you to face your emotions sincerely and confront it.
Don't keep people in suspense.

You've always loved her, right?

You're...
...in love, aren't you?
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DARUMA CLOTH 1 M $4 00
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HOPPE
RECYCLE
SECONDHAND GOODS
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WRITTEN ARTICLE
FRAGILE

TTING WOOL / HANDICRAFTS
CLOSED

Trick or treat
?

Thanks

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Last, but not least:
All the readers.

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